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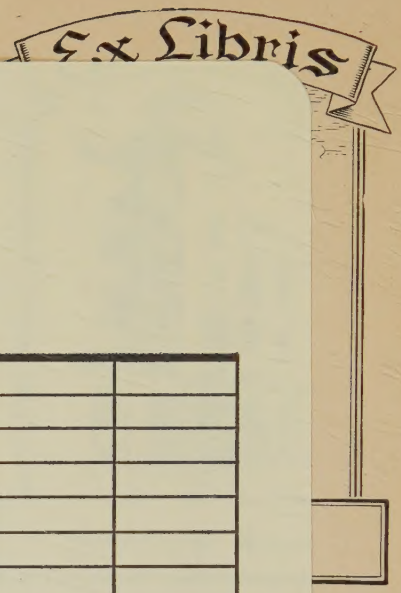

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APR 15 1996			

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Gaebelein, Arno Clemens, 1861-
Prophet Joel

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THE PROPHET JOEL

AN EXPOSITION

BY

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FOREWORD BY C. I. SCOFIELD

PUBLICATION OFFICE "OUR HOPE"
456 Fourth Avenue, New York

Copyright, April, 1909
By A. C. Gaebelein

PRINTING BY
FRANCIS EMORY FITCH, OF NEW YORK

L. I. F. E. Bible College
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FOREWORD

Of all the prophetic writings the Book of Joel has, perhaps, suffered most at the hands of modern writers. The destructive critics assert that Joel wrote after the Babylonian captivity of Judah, and even after the reconstructive work of Ezra and Nehemiah. In Joel as in Daniel they confront the alternative, either of allowing the predictive and therefore supernatural character of the book as a Divine revelation of the future, or of finding a naturalistic interpretation which eliminates inspiration. If Joel wrote in the time of Joash, then, incontestably, he was inspired. But that, to quote Welhausen, "Would be to surrender our dearly bought scientific method." To preserve the "method" the unanimous voice of antiquity, of Jewish scholarship, and of the most cogent internal evidence, are ruthlessly set aside!

But Joel has not only suffered in the house of his enemies, but also in the house of his well-intentioned friends. The method of interpretation which finds in the Christian Church the fulfilment of all Old Testament prophecy concern-

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ing Messiah's Kingdom; and in the destruction of Jerusalem, A. D. 70, the fulfilment of all prophecies concerning the day of Jehovah, has robbed the Book of Joel of its proper, natural, and unforced meaning.

It is, therefore, matter for sincere gratitude that in our day a writer whose knowledge of the whole body of predictive truth, and its inter-relations, has taken up this great portion of the Word of God for sane, reverent and adequate treatment. Having had the privilege of reading the advance sheets of this book, I count it a privilege to commend it to believers everywhere, and an honor to be thus associated with its publication.

C. I. SCOFIELD.

TO THE

"BELOVED OF GOD, CALLED SAINTS."

IRRESPECTIVE of their creeds or names, especially to those who patiently "wait for His Son from heaven," and "who love His appearing," the Heirs of glory and fellow heirs of the Lord Jesus Christ, the coming King of kings and Lord of lords, this Exposition of the Prophet Joel is affectionately dedicated.

THE PROPHET JOEL.

INTRODUCTION.

We know but little of the personality of the Prophet Joel. This is the case with many of the prophets and is in itself no argument against the authenticity of the Book. The personality of these holy men of God, the mouthpieces of the Lord, were hidden on purpose. In profane literature the person of the writer always plays an important part; but in the Word of God they are but instruments by whom God transmitted His thoughts and messages. What does it matter if we do not know the details of their lives, who they were and how long they lived, as long as we know they were the chosen vessels through whom God spake (Heb. i:1).

Joel means "Jehovah is God." He was the son of Pethuel. This is all we can find about him in the Bible. Numerous guesses have been made about his personality, but they cannot be verified. For instance, in 1 Chronicles xxiv:16 we find a Pethaliah mentioned; some have connected him

with Pethuel, so it is claimed that Joel was of a priestly family; but this cannot be confirmed. Jewish expositors state that Pethuel was none other than Samuel, because Samuel had a son whose name was Joel. But as the sons of Samuel were evil doers, it is quite impossible to accept this view. The book itself does not give us even a single hint as to who he was.

However, from his prophecies one can fix more readily the time and the place, when and where he exercised his prophetic office. He is, no doubt, the *earliest* of all the Prophets, preceding Hosea and Amos. He prophesied in Judah. This is seen from the fact that he mentions Jerusalem, Mount Zion and the Temple. He must have prophesied and written between 860 and 850 B. C. during the first part of the reign of King Joas. The arguments for this time are numerous. Without attempting to enumerate these we take a brief glance at the book itself, which bears the name of Joel.*

There is absolutely no ground for the claim, which has been made that Joel did not write this Book. The evidence is altogether on the other side that he wrote down what the Lord revealed to him. The style of the Book is sublime; it can

* See Appendix A.

only be fully appreciated if read in a corrected metric version and at one time. The oftener the entire book is thus read the more it will grow on the reader, by its vividness, terse and solemn utterances, its full, smooth phrases, and above all, by the revelation contained in these few chapters.

The occasion of the book and the prophecy of Joel was an awful scourge which had come upon the land of Judah. Locusts had fallen upon the land and stripped it of everything. In connection with the locusts there was also a drought. This was a chastisement from God. All are seen lamenting, the old and the young, the priests and the people. Extremely vivid is the description of the devastation of the land. Then the vision widens. The locusts appear no longer as a scourge of insects, but they become typical of an invading army. An army presses upon the land from the north. They make the land once more a wilderness. The alarm is sounded in Zion and the nearness of the day of Jehovah is announced. In the hour of extremity the call comes to repentance. Then comes a marvellous turning point in the picture of despair and trouble. The Lord is jealous and pities His people. He delivers them from the northern army; He restores what the locusts had eaten; He gives the land the former

and the latter rain, and with it wheat and wine and oil. At the end of the second chapter stands the prophecy predicting spiritual blessings through the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon all flesh, a prophecy which by no means has ever had its complete fulfilment, but which shall be fully accomplished in a future day. The last chapter is the solemn and sublime Finale of this great symphony of Prophecy. The day of Jehovah coming in judgment, wrath and mercy, as well as the events connected with it, is here portrayed. All this is so vividly described, that it opens up a most wonderful vista into the future. Only a closer, analytical study can bring out the treasures, which God's Spirit has here deposited in this prophetic Book. On the language and descriptions as used and given by Joel a German expositor* says: "His poetry is distinguished by the soaring flight of imagination, the originality, beauty and variety of his images and similes. The conceptions are simple enough, but they are at the same time bold and grand. The perfect order in which they are arranged, the even flow and well compacted structure of the discourse are quite remarkable."

Five times Joel's prophecy contains the phrase

*A Wünsche, Die Weissagungen, Joel's.

"the day of Jehovah." Chapter i:15; ii:1-2; 10-11; 30-31 and iii:15-16. The great subject matter of his prophetic messages is therefore "the day of Jehovah," the day in which Jehovah is "God" that is "Jehovah" will be manifested as God. This is indicated in Joel's name. He may well be called "the seer of the Day of Jehovah." What that day is, what will take place before the day comes, and after it has come, the exposition of the text will make clear.

We cannot improve upon the division of the Book as given in our English version. The Book has three parts:

I Part. Chapter I. The local plague of locusts.

II Part. Chapter II. The day of Jehovah with its preceding calamities for Israel's land; the repentance of His people; the restoration of their land and the greater Spiritual blessings.

III Part. Chapter III. Events connected with that day; the judgment of the enemies of Israel; the supremacy of Jerusalem and the Kingdom.

THE BOOK OF JOEL.

CHAPTER I.

1. The Word of Jehovah which came to Joel the Son
   of Pethuel.
2. Hear this, ye aged men
   And open the ear ye inhabitants of the land!
   Hath this happened in your days,
   Or even in the days of your fathers?
3. Relate it to your children
   And your children to their children,
   And their children to another generation.
4. What the *Gazam** left, the *Arbeh* hath devoured
   And what the *Arbeh* left, the *Jelek* hath devoured
   And what the *Jelek* left, the *Chasel* hath devoured.
5. Awake, ye drunkards and weep!
   And howl all ye drinkers of wine
   Because of the sweet wine,
   For it is taken away from your mouth.
6. For a nation has come up upon my land
   Mighty and without number—
   His teeth—lion's teeth
   The jaw teeth, that of a lioness.
7. He hath made my vine for a desolation
   And my figtree broken off;
   Peeled off completely and cast it away;

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*We left these four words untranslated for reasons which will be given in the exposition.

Its branches are made white.

8. Lament like a virgin!
Girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth.
9. Cut off is the meat and drink offering from the house of Jehovah.
The priests mourn, the servants of Jehovah.
10. "Wasted is the field
Mourning is the land—
For wasted is the corn
The new wine is dried up
The oil faileth."
11. Be ashamed, husbandmen!
Howl—vine dressers!
For the wheat and the barley.
Because the harvest of the field is lost.
12. The vine is dried up
And the figtree faileth
The pomegranate, also the palm and the apple tree.
All the trees of the field are withered.
Gone is joy from the children of men.
13. Gird yourselves and lament, O ye priests,
Howl, ministers of the altar;
Come lie down in sackcloth all night
Ye ministers of my God.
For withholden from the house of your God
Are the meat offering and the drink offering.
14. Sanctify a fast.
Call a solemn gathering.
Bring together the Elders
All the inhabitants of the land
In the house of Jehovah your God
And cry unto Jehovah.

15. Woe! For the Day!
Because near is the day of Jehovah
Even like destruction from Shaddai* it comes.
16. Is not the food cut off before our eyes?
From the house of our God joy and gladness.
17. The seeds have perished under their clods.
The garners become desolate
The storehouses are broken down
For withered is the corn.
18. Hear the cattle groan!
The herds of cattle are bewildered,
For there is no feeding place for them.
Also the flocks of sheep are made to suffer.†
19. To Thee Jehovah, I cry
For the fire has consumed the goodly places of the desert
And a flame hath burned all the trees of the field.
20. Also the cattle of the field look up‡ unto Thee
For the streams of water are dried up,
And a fire hath consumed the goodly places of the desert.

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*The only time Shaddai (Almighty) is used in Joel. In the Hebrew there is a resemblance of sound between "destruction" and "Shaddai."

†The Hebrew word, which we translate "made to suffer" means in its root "to be guilty." The form of the verb used here would best be translated by the German "büssen."

‡Another word different from the 19th verse is used, though nearly all translators use "cry." It is more a groaning, desirous looking up.

CHAPTER II.

1. Blow the trumpet in Zion
Sound an alarm in the mount of my holiness.
Let all the dwellers of the land tremble,
For the day of Jehovah cometh,
For it is near at hand.

2. A day of darkness and gloom
A day of clouds and thick darkness
Like the dawn spread upon the mountains;—
A people numerous and strong!
Never hath there been the like before,
Neither shall the like come again,
In the years of many generations.

3. A fire devoureth before them,
And behind them a flame burneth;
Before them the land is as the garden of Eden,
And behind them a desolate wilderness,
Yea, and nothing can escape them.

4. Their appearance is like the appearance of horses,
And like the horsemen shall they run.

5. Like the noise of chariots,
On the mountain tops, they shall leap,
Like the crackling of a flame of fire devouring the stubble,
Like a strong people set in battle array.

6. Before them the peoples are in distress
All faces turn to paleness.

7. They run like mighty men
They climb the wall like men of war;
And they march each one in his ways,
And they turn not aside from their ranks.

8. Nor doth one press upon another
A mighty one* marches in the highroad.
They fall upon the dart, but are not wounded.
9. They spread themselves in the city,
They run along upon the wall,
They climb up into the houses,
They enter in by the windows like a thief.
10. The earth trembleth before them,
The heavens shake,
The sun and the moon are darkened,
And the stars withdraw their shining.
11. And Jehovah uttereth His voice before his army
For very great is His host,
For He that executeth His Word is mighty;
For great is the day of Jehovah and very terrible
And who can stand it?
12. Yet even now, saith Jehovah,
Return unto me with all your heart
With fasting and with weeping and with mourning.
13. And rend your heart and not your garments,
And return unto Jehovah your God
For He is gracious and merciful,
Slow to anger and of great loving kindness
And repenteth Him of the evil.
14. Who knoweth He may return and repent
And leave a blessing behind,
An oblation and a drink offering
For Jehovah your God.
15. Blow the trumpet in Zion,
Sanctify a fast.

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*This is the literal meaning

16. Call out a solemn assembly,
Gather the people.
Sanctify a congregation.
Assemble the old men.
Gather the children,
And those that suck the breasts;
Let the bridegroom leave his chamber
And the bride her closet;
17. Let the priests the ministers of Jehovah
Weep between the porch and the altar,
And let them say:—
"Spare Thy people, O Jehovah
And give not thine heritage to reproach
That the nations should rule over them*
Wherefore should they say among the peoples
Where is their God?"
18. Then Jehovah will be jealous for His land,
And will have pity on His people.
19. And Jehovah will answer and say to His people:
Behold I am sending to you the corn,
The new wine and the oil;
And ye shall be satisfied therewith,
And I will no longer make you
For a reproach among the nations.
20. And I will remove afar from you the One from the North
And will drive him into a dry and desolate land,
His face toward the Eastern sea
His rear toward the Western sea
And his stench shall arise

*Or, "they that should be a by word of the nations."

And his ill odour shall ascend,
For he hath lifted himself up to do great things.
21. Fear not, O Land
Be glad and rejoice,
For Jehovah doeth great things.
22. Fear not, ye beasts of the field!
For the pastures of the desert spring forth
The tree beareth her fruit
The fig tree and the vine give their strength.
23. Ye children of Zion, be glad and rejoice
In Jehovah your God;
For He giveth you the early rain in righteousness,
He causeth to descend for you the showers
The early and the latter rain as before.
24. And the floors shall be full of corn,
And the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.
25. And I will restore to you the years,
Which the *Arbeh* hath eaten.
The *Jelek*, the *Chasel* and the *Gazam*,
My great army, which I sent among you.
26. Then ye shall be in abundance, and be satisfied
And praise the name of Jehovah your God,
Who has dealt wondrously with you,
And my people shall never be ashamed.
27. And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,
And that I Jehovah am your God, and none else.
And my people shall never be ashamed.
28. And it shall come to pass afterwards,
I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy;
Your old men shall dream dreams,
Your young men shall see visions.

29. Yea, even upon the men servants and the maid servants,
In those days will I pour out my Spirit.
30. And I will give wonders in the heavens and on earth,
Blood, and fire and pillars of smoke.
31. The sun shall be turned to darkness,
And the moon into blood,
Before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come.
32. And it shall come to pass
Whosoever shall call on the name of Jehovah shall be saved.
For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance,
As Jehovah hath said,
Even for the remnant whom Jehovah shall call.

CHAPTER III.

1. For behold in those days and in that time,
When I shall bring back the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem;
2. I will also bring together all nations,
And will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat;
And there will I judge them on account of my people,
And my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations,
And they divided my land.
3. And they cast lots for my people,

They gave a boy for a harlot,
And sold a girl for wine, and drank it.

4. Yea also, what have ye to do with me, O Tyre and Sidon,
And all the borders of Philistia?
Would you requite me with retaliation,
If you retaliate
Swiftly and speedily will I bring your recompense
Upon your own head.

5. Because ye have taken my silver and gold,
And have brought into your temples my very best things.

6. And the children of Judah and of Jerusalem,
Ye sold to the children of the Greeks,
That ye might remove them far from their border.

7. Behold I will raise them up out of the place whither ye sold them,
And I will return the retaliation upon your own head.

8. And I will sell your sons and your daughters
Into the hands of the sons of Judah.
And they shall sell them to the Sabeans to a far off nation.
For Jehovah hath spoken it.

9. Proclaim this among the nations:
Declare a war!
Arouse the mighty ones!
Let all the men of war draw near, let them come up!

10. Beat your ploughshares into swords,
And your pruning hooks into spears.
Let the weak say, I am strong.

11. Come together,
All ye nations round about
Gather yourselves together.
Thither cause thy mighty ones to come down
O, Jehovah!
12. Let the nations arise and come up
To the valley of Jehoshaphat
For there will I sit to judge all the nations round about.
13. Put in the sickle,
For the harvest is ripe;
Come—Tread!
For the wine-press is full,
The vats overflow;
For their wickedness is great.
14. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!
For the day of Jehovah is at hand in the valley of decision.
15. The sun and the moon are darkened
And the stars withdraw their shining.
16. And Jehovah shall roar from Zion,
And send forth His voice from Jerusalem;
And the heavens and the earth shall shake;
But Jehovah will be a refuge for His people
And a fortress for the sons of Israel.
17. And ye shall know that I, Jehovah your God,
Dwell in Zion my holy mountain;
And Jerusalem shall be holy,
And strangers shall no more pass through her.
18. And it shall come to pass in that day
That the mountains shall drop down new wine,
And the hills shall flow with milk,

And all the river beds of Judah shall be full with waters,
And a fountain shall come forth from the house of Jehovah,
And shall water the valley of Shittim.

19. Egypt shall be a desolation
And Edom shall be a desolate wilderness.
For their violence against the children of Judah,
Because they shed innocent blood in their land.

20. But Judah shall abide forever.
And Jerusalem from generation to generation.

21. And I will purge them from the blood
From which I had not purged them.
And Jehovah will dwell in Zion.

THE EXPOSITION.

After the reading of these three chapters, which contain the Word of Jehovah, as it came to Joel, the son of Pethuel, one is deeply impressed with the grandeur and solemnity of these revelations. At the same time it seems strange that so few of God's people read and prayerfully study these great prophetic visions. Of all generations we are the most privileged, living in these significant days, standing on the threshold of the fulfilment of these predictions. We behold in our day how everything is shaping for the great events with which this present age will close. The study of the sublime, God-breathed utterances of Joel is indeed of great value and help to those who truly "wait for His Son from heaven." Prophecy concerning things to come is that portion of the Bible, which reveals the triumph and glory of our blessed Lord. In it we may well read all which concerns us, for we are His fel-

low heirs. We shall also by a continued study of God's revealed purposes concerning Israel and the nations be kept from many snares, which are ever multiplying in these perilous times.

In order to get the correct knowledge of the Book of Joel it must be studied with the help of other prophecies given by the Spirit of God at other times and through different instruments. In studying prophecy, Scripture must be compared with Scripture. This is clearly stated in 2 Peter 1:20-21: "This first understanding, That no prophecy of Scripture becomes self-solving; for not by will of man was prophecy brought in at any time; but, as by the Holy Spirit they were being borne along, spake holy men of God" (Rotherham). Or as John N. Darby translates it: "Knowing this first, that the scope of no prophecy of Scripture is had from its own particular interpretation, for prophecy was not even uttered by the will of man, but holy men of God spake under the power of the Holy Spirit." The same Spirit spoke in each Prophet, revealing God's purposes concerning the future, confirming His previous testimony and adding new revelations.

As Joel is the earliest of God's Prophets, the Holy Spirit revealed through him, so to speak, in

a nutshell, the great facts concerning the day of the Lord, its preceding and succeeding events. The subsequent Prophets did not copy from him, but the Holy Spirit unfolds the great theme.

And now we turn to the text itself and give an exposition of what God revealed through Joel.

The important question is the question concerning the locusts. The prominence of the locusts, their dreadful work, as pictured in the first chapter, and their second mention in the second chapter is evident to all readers of this prophet. Only in the third chapter the locusts are not mentioned. It is therefore an important question what these locusts mean. Are they simply the scourge, which at stated times devastate oriental countries? Did such a scourge come upon Israel's land in the day of Joel, or was it a prophecy about the future? Are the locusts symbolical? Are they the type of the Assyrian invasion? These are a few of the questions with which the numerous expositors of this book have wrestled. We have examined some of the leading expositions of this prophet; some of them were written in the fourth and fifth century. In modern days during the last hundred years not a few attempts have been made to interpret the book of Joel. It would be intensely interesting to write a

history of the interpretation of Joel and to point out the different views which have been expressed by the Greek and Latin "church fathers" as well as by the reformers, such as Calvin and Luther, and the expositors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, this would hardly help us in understanding this book. Most of the expositions we have seen in different languages are given to spiritualizing. Thus one of the oldest expositors explains chapter ii:24: "the corn, the wine and the oil," as being fulfilled in the church. The corn he applies to the body of Christ, the wine to the blood and the oil as being the Holy Spirit. Nearly all of them fail, on account of their ignorance of dispensational truths not distinguishing between Israel and the Church, while others, who have some light in this direction, break down in some other way or are fanciful in their application. The Jewish expositors, however, are far more satisfactory. They at least adhere to the literal meaning. Some of the oldest see in the locusts the types of the nations which have preyed upon the land. The invasion of the land by a hostile army, as described in the second chapter, is interpreted by some of these ancient writers as being the invasion of Gog and Magog. Several Jewish interpreters of Joel declare that

the whole book is descriptive of the days of the Messiah. By this they mean the glorious manifestation of the Messiah as King for the establishment of the Kingdom, the deliverance of his earthly people and the punishment of their enemies.

Our conception of the locusts is that they were in the first instance literal locusts. At the time the Word of the Lord came to Joel the land of Judah was fearfully devastated by the dread locust plague. They had covered the entire land and nothing had escaped them. A great drouth followed; human beings and all creation suffered in a terrible way. Through the locusts even the sacrifices and the temple worship had become an impossibility. This literal locust plague is the foundation fact and starting point of the prophecy of Joel. Its description is confined to the first chapter.

But is this the sole object of the first chapter to describe the oft occurring locust invasions and to portray vividly the work of destruction wrought by these powerful insects? Are we to look for nothing but a description of what happened then and nothing else? If the first chapter in our prophet had no further meaning than the description of what the literal locusts did in Israel's land,

we could then hardly look upon it as the Word of God. It would rank indeed as one of the finest literary products in any language, but the Word of God with a message deeper than a mere literary description, we could not call it. However, the magnificent picture of the then present locust plague and the havoc they produced, has a deeper, a spiritual and prophetic meaning.

The literal locusts and what they did to the land are prophetically typical of the different world powers which have preyed and are still permitted to prey upon the land, which God has given to His earthly people. The first chapter therefore becomes a great prophecy concerning the condition of the land of Israel during the times of the Gentiles and up to the time when the Day of the Lord begins. This day is mentioned by the Prophet in this first chapter (verse 15). It confirms fully our interpretation that the chapter has a great prophetic application and directs us to the future day of Jehovah. Our exposition, taking up each verse, will bring this out more fully.

In the second chapter the locusts are mentioned again, however, not in the first part, but only in the second part, where the promise of restora-

tion is found, that the evil, which the locusts have done should be repaired.

In the first part of this second chapter we find first of all the day of the Lord announced and then there follows a description of an invading army, which comes from the North. It is strange that some of the most learned expositors hold that this entire description still refers to the literal locusts, when the word locust is not at all mentioned. It is quite true the imagery is taken from a mighty locust swarm, but there is absolutely no reason why literal locusts should be meant here. Literal locusts are before us in the first instance in the opening chapter, typifying nations, and here in the second chapter it is a prophecy about an invading host, which swarms over the land in immense numbers working great destruction like the literal locusts.

We do not doubt that partially the prophecy was fulfilled in the Assyrian invasion, but the final great fulfilment is a matter of the future. Such an invasion as described here will come at the end of this age. A part of the nation must be restored to the land and once more the trumpets are sounded as of old. After the description of this last great invasion of the land we find the Lord's interference and how Israel's land is re-

stored, the nation blest and the Holy Spirit poured out.

The third chapter has nothing to say about the locusts, but we see instead the nations, which were represented by the locusts, gathered together for judgment. It is a great descriptive chapter of the day of the Lord and all the events which cluster around that great coming day. And now we are prepared to take up the chapters separately and follow the prophecy of Joel in an analytical study.

CHAPTER I.

The Word of the Lord which came to Joel, the son of Pethuel (Verse 1).

This evidently is the superscription of the entire book. And a most significant one it is.

Even at that early date in which Joel lived and exercised his prophetic office the people disbelieved the messages God sent them. In this solemn beginning the Prophet makes known that he is only the mouthpiece of Jehovah and that the words he spoke are not his own, but it is the Word of the Lord. Such a positive statement that God spake by the Prophets (Hebrews i:1) and that their utterances are inspired is found at the beginning of nearly all the prophetic books and occurs over and over again in the course of their visions and utterances. In the following passages the same phrase is found: Hosea i:1; Micah i:1; Zephaniah i:1; Zechariah ix:1; xii:1; Mal. i:1; Jeremiah xi:1; xliii:8; xlix:13, etc. Other Prophets begin with "the vision of the Lord" or the "burden" (utterance), while the sentence "thus saith the Lord" occurs hundreds of times.

Yet in face of these positive statements men, who call themselves Christians and claim learning, can deny the inspiration of the Bible and teach that the visions and utterances of these holy men of God (2 Peter i:21) as well as other books of the Old Testament, are not the Word of God. Such a denial is fearful indeed, for it stamps these instruments of Jehovah as impostors, who claimed that the Lord spoke to them and that they faithfully transmitted the message, when, according to them, He did not.

The Word of Jehovah we have here before us and it still is unchanged in our possession. It is the same as it came to Joel. The Word of Jehovah is imperishable; it will exist forever.

But who was the instrument into whose pen the Spirit of God dictated these sublime words? As stated before in our brief introduction, we know next to nothing about the personality of Joel. In fact, all we know about him, which is reliable, is contained in this first verse. The name of Joel was not a rare one among the ancient Hebrews. Samuel had a son by that name (1 Sam. viii:2), he was his first born; then there was a Levite by that name (2 Chronicles xxix:12); the name is also found in nine other places in the Old Testament. However, the identity of any of these

with the prophet Joel, the son of Pethuel, cannot be established. The brief but solemn beginning of the book fits perfectly to the solemn and brief messages the Lord committed to Joel.

"Hear this, ye aged men,
"And open the ear ye inhabitants of the land!
"Hath this happened in your days,
"Or even in the days of your fathers?
"Relate it to your children
"And your children to their children,
"And their children to another generation."
(Verses 2-3.)

These two verses must be looked upon as an introduction to the description of the great calamity which had befallen the land. It is in the form of an appeal to the people. The words indicate at once the greatness of the disaster. What happened to the land is of such a fearful character that it is unprecedented. He calls upon the aged men or elders among the people first of all to bear witness to this fact that never before has such a thing happened in the land of Judah. The memory of the old men reached the furthest back, therefore he mentions them first. A similar word is found in Moses' prophetic song. "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations; ask thy father, and he will shew thee;

thy elders and they will tell thee" (Deut. xxxii:7). Then he calls upon all the inhabitants of the land, if they ever witnessed such a terrible evil. It is likewise an appeal to them to listen and to heed the God-given message. Such appeals are found frequently in the prophetic Word (Deut. xxxii:1; Psl. xlix:2; Isaiah i:2; Jerm. ii:12; Hosea iv:1; Amos iii:1). The visitation of the locusts is to be related to the coming generations. They are to know of it and learn the lessons from the great calamity, which had come upon the land. The coming generations are mentioned because the prophetic vision sees not only the present calamity, but behind that affliction stand *future* great judgments for the land and the people. The Holy Spirit has put therefore in the beginning of this book an important hint. The future generations are to remember what God did in His punitive action and what He threatens to do, typically indicated by the locust plague. Higher critics have maintained that this appeal to tell the children is borrowed from Exodus x:2. "That thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how I am the Lord." The judgment by the locusts follows in that chapter in Exodus

and in the sixth verse we read how severe that judgment was. "And they shall fill thy houses, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; which neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day." Joel did not borrow the language from Exodus, but the Spirit of God used through him similar language as He used in addressing Pharaoh when he was about to be humbled for his wicked pride and hard heartedness.

The fourth verse contains the description of the locusts. This fourth verse is a most important one. We shall examine it in detail and give some information about the locusts and their typical prophetic meaning.

"What the *Gazam* left, the *Arbeh* hath devoured
And what the *Arbeh* left, the *Jelek* hath devoured
And what the *Jelek* left, the *Chasel* hath devoured."

First of all a description of this insect. It is necessary to have some information on this subject in order to understand why they are used to typify so important a prophetic theme.*

*We spent considerable time in ascertaining these facts and to establish their reliability. The best work on the Locusts we have seen is by A. Munro, the locust plague and its suppression. We have also used Dr. K. A. Credner's work "Ueber die Heuschrecken," Halle, 1831.

We left the Hebrew names untranslated because the translation makes it appear as if there were different insects like the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, which besides the locust spoiled the land. This however is not the case; it was one insect alone which did the damage. However these locusts appeared in a fourfold form. Considering these four words first etymologically there is no difficulty to give their meaning. Gazam means "to gnaw off," showing the destructiveness of the insect; this word is used only once more in the prophetic word outside of Joel (Amos iv:9).

Arbeh is derived from rabbah, which means "to be many." It is the common Hebrew name for "locusts" and may denote their migratory habits; they appear in immense swarms of millions. Jelek has the meaning "to lick off"; it is used in Psalm cv:34. Chasel is "to devour or consume"; it is frequently used in other passages. The use of these four different words is not for poetical reasons, as it has been so frequently stated by expositors. Nor are these four words simply used to show the destructive character of the insect. The locust has four stages; the most destructive is the fourth, the devouring locust. These four stages are possibly indicated in the book of Leviticus. "The

locust after his kind, the bald locust after its kind, the beetle after its kind and the grasshopper after its kind." The locust passes through these stages in its development. The locust which gnaws, then they get wings and become the flying locust, the third the licking locust and the fourth, the devouring locust. These four kinds of the locust devastated the land. Why the number four is thus made prominent in this great calamity, which points forward to the day of Jehovah, what is its significant prophetic meaning, we shall show later. We must first give some more information about the locusts.

The origin of the locusts and where they come from is uncertain. In South Africa they are supposed to appear from the vast deserts of that continent; in South America from the waste lands in the west of Brazil and on our continent from the great southwestern deserts. Locusts have at one time or another devastated the largest part of the habitable world. History gives ample proof of it. The island of Cyprus was completely stripped by locust invasions for 250 years. Record upon record could be given for almost 2000 years in which locusts did their fearful work, so vividly portrayed in this chapter, in many countries. Says the authority from which we learn these

facts, "Everyone who has carefully observed what occurs in a visitation of locusts must admit the literal accuracy of all that is said on the subject in the Bible. Their characteristics to-day exactly tally with the Bible accounts. I saw under my own eye not only a large vineyard loaded with young grapes, but whole fields of corn disappear as if by magic, and the hope of the husbandman vanish like smoke. There remained not any green thing in the trees or in the herbs of the field."

The locusts make their appearance in their temporary homes in large companies or swarms, composed of an innumerable number, as flying locusts; these may be termed "invading" or "wandering" companies. They are sometimes so numerous that when about seven to ten miles distant the swarm appears as a cloud in the atmosphere, and really forms one so black in the clear and rarefied air of the countries which they visit as to at once attract attention and wonder from its peculiarity. At first you are apt to imagine the cloud comes from the burning of a forest on account of its unusual darkened colour. By watching the cloud one will soon be undeceived, and the "vanguard" of the swarm will make their appearance around you.

It is impossible to estimate the number of locusts in these clouds, but some idea may be formed from the fact that when they are driven, as it is sometimes the case in storm, into the sea, so many are washed ashore that they lie on the beach as a bank from three to four feet thick for fifty to a hundred miles in length, and the stench from the decayed bodies, it is affirmed, is noticed for 150 miles inland, enough to generate disease. Please read at this point Joel ii:20.

In other cases when the cloud composes itself and spreads out, there is an unbroken area covered by them for several hundred miles in length and breadth. A careful investigator, Captain Beaufort, has recorded a cloud of locusts forty miles long by three hundred yards in depth, which he estimated must have contained 169 billions of locusts; but really in face of these facts one loses all count of numbers, the crowd is so appalling. So enormous is the multitude that the sun can be looked at as if there was an eclipse, the sun is literally darkened, and shadows cannot then be cast from it. The reader is again referred to our prophet to see the description of the invading army under the imagery of the locusts in chapter ii:2 and 10.

The speed in which they fly varies. They can

be often seen going at the rate of 12 miles an hour, and at other times they seem to hover about. Their movements are very orderly. They appear to act together in their movements by a common sort of instinct or impulse. See Joel ii:8, etc. Their flight makes a crackling noise, sufficient to stampede cattle. The locusts without wings in the previous stage are called "hoppers." When they are on the march they appear so determined and bent on the fearful execution of their work that they resemble in many aspects an army on the march (Joel ii:4-5). They move in open file, and carry themselves in a proud, haughty way, with heads high up and fixed. It is rather beautiful and interesting to see them on the march. It is in this marching stage that they do enormous damage, and eat every edible thing in their path. They leave nothing behind but desolation.

In our book we study, the locusts are used in the second chapter as types of an army. Eyewitnesses declare that these locusts marching along are indeed a miniature army. The whole of the company begin to walk at the same time, as if by order; the head is kept erect, and the neck is as if stiffened. They go straight on, irrespective of danger, and though they manifest a decided

power sometimes to select a slightly different course, yet they are not easily turned from their course, and being so numerous and closely phalanxed nothing escapes them. The sight of this "army" is a very impressive one, and once seen will never be forgotten. They are divided into companies; these companies are not hindered or deterred from pursuing the course they have elected. The column follows the vanguard, and when the vanguard changes its course the change seems to be curiously communicated in wave-like fashion all along the company following. We find them jumping into the water of a river one after the other until they bridge it by their own bodies, and the rest of the army cross over in force to the other side, even though the expanse of water be a mile or more in breadth. The army carries out persistently the general direction as to the march.

It is impossible to stop the army of locusts. Trenches and ditches do not stop them. They crawl upon the houses and enter in at the windows. All this is most interesting as we read, especially the second chapter of Joel's vision.

To follow a description of the mode of development of the different locusts from the egg would lead us too far. It is, however, very in-

structive and interesting. The adult locust has the following very pronounced parts which may be observed: a strong, wild looking head; a string collar, inside which the neck moves. This collar is a kind of an armoured coat; powerful, peculiarly formed legs, attached to a short square trunk, four wings, two antennae and a long abdomen. The head resembles strongly that of the horse. This is why the German people call the locusts "Heupferde" (Hay horses). They look ferocious.

From these descriptions we have briefly given, we learn why the Lord selected the locusts as the instruments by which He brought disaster upon the land. They were indeed best fitted to lay the beautiful land bare, but besides this they were a lifelike picture of armies coming into the land. God had in the law threatened the land with this plague if the people were disobedient. "Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field and shall but gather little in it; for the locust shall consume it" (Deut. xxviii:38). "All thy trees and fruit of thy land shall the locust consume" (verse 42). The same judgment God had put upon Egypt He permitted to come upon His own land.

But these literal locusts were only the foreshadowings of more awful judgments which were in

store for the land. Hostile armies, prefigured by the locusts, the armies of the Gentiles, were to come in and lay the land waste. And now we come to the significance of the number four. The Gazam, Arbeh, Jelek and Chasel, called later by the Lord "my great army" (ii:25) have a meaning, which is important. Elsewhere in the Word we read of four kinds of punishments. "And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the Lord: the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear; and such as are for the famine, to the famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity" (Jeremiah xv:3). See also Ezekiel xlv:21. However, the number four is also found in connection with God's judgments upon the land of Israel. Twice we have it mentioned in the Book of Daniel and once in the prophet Zechariah.

The King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream and the image which he saw was composed of four parts, each part being typical of a great worldpower, Babylon, the Medo-Persian worldpower, the Græco-Macedonian and the Roman. The second chapter in Daniel gives us the full record of this. Then Daniel himself had a great vision and saw four beasts rising out of the sea. These beasts are the pictures of the same worldpowers, predicted in the dream image of the King. The last, the

Roman empire is to devour; the most fearful of all. The armies of all four have marched through Israel's land and laid it waste and the most fearful destruction was wrought by the fourth, the armies of the Roman empire. The prophet Zechariah in his second night vision beheld four horns and the Divine interpretation states that these horns have scattered Judah and Jerusalem. They are symbolical of the same four worldpowers. The locusts mentioned by their four names are types of these four worldpowers. We believe the Hebrew rabbis who explained the meaning of the locusts in precisely the same way as we do were correct.

But the end of this devastation is not yet. Once more the land will see an invasion and Jerusalem will be compassed by armies, the armies of nations. This will be in connection with the great coming day of the Lord.

The invasion of the locusts, the fearful results of that invasion and the call to the priests and to the people to lament are the contents of this chapter from verse 5-20. We must bear in mind the two facts we have previously stated: 1. It was a literal locust plague which swept over the land in Joel's day. What he describes is that which took place; it was a divine judgment upon the land and the

people. 2. This locust invasion has a deeper prophetic meaning. It is a divine foreshadowing of the judgments which were to pass over the land of Israel and the people on account of their disobedience. The locusts are fitting types of powerful nations, whom God permitted to enter the land and lay it waste. The four names of locusts are used, as we learned already, because four great world-powers were to dominate over Palestine during that prophetic period called in the Scripture "the times of the Gentiles." We behold, therefore, in this description, a prophetic picture of the condition of the land, which God gave to Abraham and his natural descendants up to the time when the day of the Lord dawns, when the deplorable condition of the land and the people will come to an end. These two facts we shall keep before us as we write briefly on these verses.

The division of the rest of chapter i:5-20 is easily made.

I. The call to the drunkards to lament (verses 5-7).

II. The call to the people and the priests to lament and to mourn (verses 8-12).

III. The call to the priests to lament and to cry to Jehovah (verses 13, 14).

IV. The approaching day and the condition of the land (verses 15-18).

V. The prayer of the Prophet (verses 19-20).

I. The call to the drunkards to lament (verses 5-7).

"Awake ye drunkards and weep,
And howl all ye drinkers of wine,
Because of the sweet wine
For it is taken away from your mouth."—(Verse 5.)

The first swarm of the locust, the *Gazam,* had appeared at the close of the summer, when the fruits of the field had already been taken in. Only the vineyards had not been harvested. The locusts, therefore, attacked the vineyards and the fruits of the vine disappeared rapidly before the invading multitudes. The drinkers of wine were to suffer first of all the results of the judgment. In other passages of the prophets we read of the sin of drunkenness, which was prevalent among the Jewish people. This was the condition of many in the days of prosperity, when the herdsman of Tekoa, Amos, prophesied of the coming days of trouble; he pronounced his divine "woe" upon them (Amos vi:1-6). In two great judgment chapters of Isaiah this sin is mentioned. It is the second woe in chapter v; "Woe unto them that rise

up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them" (Is. v:11). In chapter xxiv, where the prophet beholds a desolate earth, the land utterly emptied and spoiled, we read likewise of the wine and the calamity which comes upon the drunkards. "The new wine mourneth, the wine languisheth, all the merry-hearted do sigh. The mirth of the tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth. They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it" (xxiv:7-9). They were given to wine and mockery. "But they have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink; they are swallowed up of wine; they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision; they stumble in judgment" (Isaiah xxviii:7). But besides the literal drunkenness with wine we must also think of that which stood behind such a conduct. They forgot God and His Word, had given themselves up to pleasures and worldliness on account of which the judgment of God came upon them.* Out of this

*It is not different in the end of this present age. "Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" is the

stupefied condition they were to awake and to weep, for there was no more wine. God's judgment had robbed them of the source of their pleasure.

"For a nation has come up upon my land
Mighty and without number—
His teeth lion's teeth
The jaw teeth, that of a lioness."—(Verse 6.)

This verse gives us light on the prophetic meaning of the locusts. They are called a nation. The ants are likewise called a people. "The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer" (Prov. xxx:25). There is, however, a difference in the word "people" or "nation" in the Hebrew, as used in these passages. The locusts are called a *"goi,"* which means a heathen nation, opposed to God's earthly people. The ants are termed *"am,"* the Hebrew word for people generally applied to Israel. Occasionally God calls His earthly people a "goi," especially when they had sunk to the level of the Gentiles about them and

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prediction of the state of Christians in name in the last days. Statistics tell a horrible tale. According to the statistics, this "Christian (?) nation" expends yearly over a thousand million for strong drink and a few millions only for foreign missions. What an awakening is coming bye and bye for the lovers of pleasures!

had displeased Him by their disobedience. The Gentiles or nations, which are opposing Israel and are revealed as hating and despising them are called "gojim," the plural of the word used in this verse. The literal locusts came like a mighty nation without number and devoured everything. As those locusts had come, marching like an army, so an actual heathen nation, mighty and without number, was to fall into the land. The Gentiles are prefigured by the locusts. This comparison is made elsewhere in the Scriptures. See Numbers xiii:33; Isaiah xl:22; Jeremiah li:14. Gentiles, like locusts, were to come upon the land, which Joel calls "my land." It is the land, which is called in Isaiah "thy land, O Immanuel" (Isa. viii:8). And so it came true. No land has seen such scenes of troubles as that land; and the end is not yet. Once more the land will pass through great calamities and Gentiles mighty and without number will march through it and commit deeds of violence.

The metaphor "lion's teeth" and "jaw teeth of a lioness" must not be overlooked. Locusts, of course, have not lion's teeth nor such jaw teeth. It means that as destructive as the teeth of the lion are among the animals, so destructive are the teeth of the locusts to vegetation. But the use of the lion fully harmonizes with the prophetic meaning. In

Daniel vii the Prophet to whom God revealed the history of the Gentile worldpowers and their course, as well as that which will follow the times of the Gentiles, the coming of the Son of Man and the establishment of His kingdom, beholds the great "gojim," or nations, who are to have the rule. "In the first year of Belshazzar, King of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and vision of His head upon his bed; then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters. Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse from one another. The first was like a *lion* and had eagle's wings" (Dan. vii:1-4). This is the first great nation, which came like the locusts upon the land. That the lion is used as the figure of the Babylonian empire in its destructiveness, and that the locusts are described first of all as having lion's teeth, is indeed very striking.

The fourth great worldpower, the Roman, with its future revival in the form of ten kingdoms and its little horn, is described by Daniel as follows: "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great *iron teeth, it devoured* and brake in pieces and stamped the residue with

the feet of it; and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns" (Dan. vii:7). Here the teeth to devour are mentioned. These correspondencies with the first mention of the locusts as "a nation" compared to lions in their destructiveness and their strong teeth, devouring everything, with this vision of Daniel is, to our mind, sufficient to prove that God used the locusts to foreshadow the greater calamity for the land.

"He hath made my vine for a desolation
And my fig tree broken down;
Peeled off completely and cast it away;
His branches are made white."—(Verse 7.)

The destructiveness of the insects is now still more described. They do not confine themselves to grass and leaves. "Neither herbs, nor shrubs, nor trees remain unhurt. Whatever is either grassy, or covered with leaves, is injured, as if it had been burned with fire. Even the bark of trees is nibbled with their teeth, so that the injury is not confined to one year alone."*

The vineyards had been attacked and soon all was desolation. The fig trees were broken down; the bark had been peeled off and the branches,

*Histor. Aethiop. by H. Ludolf.

spoiled of its sapbearing covering, showed the white, lifeless wood. Devastation and death followed the locust invasion. Without following these descriptions in their literal meaning, we turn to that which is hidden under this great calamity which had visited the land. The vine and fig tree are prominently mentioned. The vine and fig tree suffered the most. It is incorrect, as some expositors state, that the reason for the prominence of the vine and fig tree is that the locusts mostly attack these two. It has been proven that it is not so. Others say, "in the description of the devastation caused by the army of locusts, the vine and fig tree are mentioned as the noblest productions of the land, which the Lord has given to His people for their inheritance" (Keil and Delitzsch). This may be so, but it does not take in consideration that it speaks of only *one* vine and *one* fig tree. Furthermore the personal suffix "my" is added; my vine—my fig tree. According to teachers who see in these words nothing else than a poetical description of a land which was spoiled by the locusts, it must mean that Joel possessed a vine and a fig tree, and that they were broken down and peeled off.

But the prophet does not lament the loss of any personal vine or fig tree. He speaks "The Word of Jehovah." It is Jehovah's vine and fig tree

which are spoiled. Besides the olive tree, the type of God's ever green covenant with Israel, the Spirit of God has used the vine and the fig tree as types of the earthly people of God. Israel is God's vine and God's fig tree. This is clearly seen in God's holy Word. "Thou hast brought a *vine* out of Egypt; thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river. Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood does waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it. Return, we beseech Thee, O God of Hosts; look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine, and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that Thou madest strong for Thyself" (Ps. lxxx:8-15). Here we learn Israel is the vine brought out of Egypt and how the Lord treated this vine in His goodness. We find here, also, a description of the waste condition of that vine. The boar of the wood (the Gentiles) has wasted it. The prayer "Return—look down from heaven—visit Thy vine"—is the prayer of the remnant of

Israel during the time called in Scripture "the great tribulation—Jacob's trouble." And why was the vine thus waste? Isaiah v:2-6 gives us the answer: "He fenced it and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vines, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein; and He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up, and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down. And I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it" (see Matt. xxi:33).

That Israel is typified by the fig tree is likewise learned from the Word of God. Read Luke xiii:6-9; Matthew xxi:17-21; xxix:32.

God's vine and fig tree, on which He spent so much labor looking for fruit, was laid bare and

spoiled by the Gentiles, as the locusts spoiled the vine and the fig tree. And still it is so. But some day the vine will yield the fruit and the fig tree will put forth new leaves. And here we must likewise mention that sitting under the fig tree and the vine, fruitful once more, and its fruit enjoyed, is in Scripture a picture of millennial blessedness, when the enemies of Israel are no more wasting the land, when these enemies are destroyed. "And He shall judge among people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift sword up against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and fig tree, and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts has spoken it" (Micah. iv:3-4). "In that day saith the Lord of Hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree' (Zech. iii:10).

In the second chapter, the chapter of the restoration and blessing for Israel's land, the fig tree and the vine are mentioned as yielding their fruit. All this shows the divine wisdom and harmony of God's Word and proves that the whole chapter is prophetic.

II. The call to the people and the priests to lament and to mourn (Verses 8-12).

"Lament like a virgin!
Girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth."—
(Verse 8.)

The call is now addressed to the whole congregation. The people are to lament like a virgin who has been bereft of the husband of her youth. This again is very significant. It reminds us at once of Isaiah liv:6. "For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God." Such is the relationship of Jehovah to His earthly people. But the sins of the people broke this relationship. The first part of Hosea shows all this fully. Here, too, we read of the time when Israel will call the Lord "Ishi," which means "my husband" (Hosea ii:16). This corresponds with the vision of Isaiah concerning the great future of the people. "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed, desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah (My delight in her), and thy land Beulah (married); for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee; and as a bridegroom rejoiceth over

the bride, so shalt thy God rejoice over thee" (Is. lxii:4, 5). "For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is His name." Is. liv:5). This will all be fulfilled in the day of restoration and blessing for His earthly people, ushered in with the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This relationship of God to Israel under the type of marriage is typically seen in the Book of Ruth. Naomi (the pleasant one) is Israel. Her husband Elimelech (my God is King). He dies; the relationship of God with Israel became broken and Naomi becomes Mara, which means bitterness.

Joel called upon the people to lament with the lamentation of a virgin, who, girded in sackcloth, mourns for the husband of her youth. The calamity was so great as to call for such grief. But deeper we behold the prophetic indication of Jerusalem's forsaken condition, as Isaiah beheld it when he wrote: "And her gates shall lament and mourn and she, being desolate, shall sit on the ground" (Is. iii:26).

"Cut off is the meat and drink offering from the house of Jehovah.
The priests mourn, the servants of Jehovah:
Wasted is the field
Mourning is the land—
For wasted is the corn
The new wine is dried up
The oil faileth."—(Verses 9, 10.)

So great was the trouble which had come upon the land that the meat and drink offerings could no longer be brought in the temple. The temple worship ceased. Corn and wine and oil had completely failed. The judgment which had fallen upon the land had resulted in a suspension of the sacrifices. This meant in reality a suspension of the covenant relation. The people could no longer approach God in the manner as commanded through Moses. Josephus, the great Jewish historian, writes that even in the great siege of Jerusalem the offerings and sacrifices did not cease. When Jerusalem was besieged by the Romans the sacrificial worship was not suspended till there were no more people to bring these sacrifices. The priests suffered under this severely. Not alone was the temple service made impossible for them and they could no longer exercise their priestly functions, but they also lost their income because they received their portions from these offerings.

All this was certainly the condition of Judah in the days of Joel. It is a vivid and faithful description of the great calamity, which had come so suddenly upon the land. But what took place then was a foreshadowing of what should be the case during the times of the Gentiles, when Israel is

scattered among the nations no longer in their homeland. All sacrifices and offerings connected with the temple were to cease. And all came true. This likewise was predicted. "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod and teraphim" (Hosea iii:4). The tenth verse contains the mournful complaint of the priests. All nature suffered. A great change had come over the fruitful land, flowing with milk and honey. In the place of the greatest fruitfulness had come the most awful desolation. The locusts had wasted the field so that the land mourned; corn, wine and oil were gone. Such desolations are repeatedly described in connection with the judgments of God. "The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish" (Is. xxiv:4). "For thus has the Lord said, the whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end. For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black; because I have spoken it, I have purposed it and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it" (Jerem. iv:27, 28).

We see how all the descriptions of local disas-

ter apply to the punishment which God threatened to His earthly people and their land on account of their disobedience. For many centuries all these predicted judgments have had their literal fulfilment.

"Be ashamed, husbandmen!
Howl—vinedressers!
For the wheat and the barley,
Because the harvest of the field is lost.

The vine is dried up
And the fig tree faileth.
The pomegranate, also the palm and the apple tree,
All the trees of the field are withered.
Gone is joy from the children of men."—(Verses 11, 12.)

After the description of the condition of the land comes the lament and grief of the husbandmen and the vinedressers. The words show still greater destruction. The whole harvest is gone and besides the failure of the vine and the fig tree other trees are mentioned. Indeed, all the trees are described as withered, and thus the desolation appears still greater. On account of the severity of this visitation joy had left the children of men. His people are stripped of their joy and mourning and sackcloth have taken the place of gladness and rejoicing.

III. The call to the priests to lament and to cry to Jehovah (verses 13-14).

"Gird yourselves and lament, O ye priests,
Howl, ministers of the altar;
Come, lie down in sackcloth all night
Ye ministers of my God.
For withholden from the house of your God
Are the meat offering and the drink offering.

Sanctify a fast.
Call a solemn gathering;
Bring together the Elders,
All the inhabitants of the land
In the house of Jehovah your God
And cry unto Jehovah."—(Verses 13, 14.)

Up to this we had the call to the drunkards to awake, to the nation as such to lament, to the husbandmen and the vinedressers; we heard also the lamenting cry of the priests. The priests are now especially addressed by the prophet. They are called upon to acknowledge the visitation as a judgment from God and besides repenting themselves to call the people together for a solemn gathering and to cry to Jehovah for deliverance. They were to take off their priestly garments and instead of them put on the garments of mourning, that is sackcloth. On all these customs we shall say nothing further. The prophet gives as reason for calling on them to lament and

to howl, to lie down in sackcloth all night because the meat offering and drink offering was withholden from the house of the Lord. The significant fact is that there is no response from the priests to this call. Not a word of repentance and prayer is heard from the side of the priests or the people in this chapter. At the close of the chapter the prophet alone is seen crying to Jehovah and we shall see later what that signifies. In the second chapter we find a great scene of repentance, though priests and people indeed rend more than their garments, that is, their hearts. Then Jehovah interferes in behalf of His suffering land and people. That response, however, comes after the last invasion of a people numerous and strong, coming from the North. Here in our chapter the absence of any repentance from the side of the people shows prophetically their hardness and blindness during this age. Though their temple is burned, no more sacrifices can be brought, no rest for the soles of their feet, no joy and peace for them; they continue like their fathers in stiffneckedness. But it is not always to be thus. A great affliction is coming upon them and during that time they will turn to the Lord and cry to Him for deliverance. All this will be brought to our view later in our studies.

IV. The approaching day and the condition of the land (verses 15-18).

"Woe! For the day!
Because near is the day of Jehovah.
Even like destruction from Shaddai it comes."—(Verse 15.)

We have followed up to this verse the description of the locust invasion as it happened in Joel's day and the terrible devastation which these powerful insects left behind. We likewise learned the prophetic application of every part of this inspired description. Our meditation on the different happenings and the comparison of Scripture with Scripture have shown that such a prophetic application is correct.

The verse we have now reached in which the prophet for the first time speaks of the *Yom Jehovah,* the day of the Lord, presents some difficulties. The question which arises first is the question of the connection with the preceding descriptions of the destruction wrought by the locusts. Is it a part of that which Joel describes, or must it be detached? Has it reference to the day in which the locust swarms covered the land, or is it future? According to some of the older interpreters of this book the verse must be looked upon as belonging to the preceding verses, so that the priests, who are called upon to lament would also have to utter these

words. We do not agree with this but look upon the 15th verse as an independent exclamation of the Prophet. In the midst of the weird description of the then present calamity the Prophet beholds a greater judgment approaching. The vision he beholds makes him to break out in a lamentation. The word "Woe" is, as every searcher of God's Word knows, often connected with the great judgments of the day of Jehovah. We find it in both Testaments and refer the reader to the following passages: Isaiah v:8-23; xxix:1; Ezek. xxx:1-3; Amos vi:1; Hab. ii:6-19; Matthew xi:21; xxiv:19; Rev. viii:13; ix:12; xi:14; xii:12.

But what day is it which the Prophet beholds? Is it the day of the Lord which is so often mentioned by the other Prophets both before, during and after Babylonian captivity, of which the Lord and His Apostles speak in the New Testament? Or is it some other great judgment which Joel beheld, which he calls the day of the Lord and which has been fulfilled long ago? Or is it one of many judgments which have been going on till after many similar judgments the final great judgment is reached? A prominent expositor holds to the last view and says * * * "God makes the history of the world, through His rule over all creatures in heaven and earth, into a continuous judgment, which will conclude at the end of this course of the world

with a great and universal act of judgment, through which everything that has been brought to eternity by the stream of time unjudged and unadjusted, will be judged and adjusted once for all, to bring to an end the whole development of the world in accordance with its divine appointments, and perfect the kingdom of God by the destruction of all his foes."* According to this view the locust judgment forms one element of the day of the Lord. Now the above quoted words may sound well and the thought appear plausible, but the view is far from being the right one. The *Yom Jehovah,* the day of the Lord, which Joel announces in this brief exclamatory verse is the same day of which the other Prophets have so much to say. It is that great coming day with its attending events, which will bring the visible manifestation of Jehovah, preceded by tribulation and wrath, and followed by judgment as well as Righteousness, Peace and Glory for this earth.

That this is the true meaning of this phrase "the day of the Lord" is learned from the other passages in this book where Joel speaks again of that day. We give the other passages:

Chapter ii:1, 2. The description of the day of the Lord in these words corresponds to the descriptions of that day by the other prophets; for instance, Zeph. i:15.

*Keil.

Chapter ii:11. From these words it is still more evident that the great and terrible day in which the voice of Jehovah will be heard must be the great day in which the Lord appears in behalf of His people.

Chapter ii:31; iii:14-16. These last two passages establish the truth of our assertion beyond a doubt. The accompanying physical signs, the darkening of the sun, the blood-red moon, the shaking of the heavens and the earth, all these are the signs which precede the visible manifestation of the Lord in His day of power and glory. The Book of Joel, therefore, contains five passages in which the seer mentions the day of the Lord; the first time in the verse in the first chapter, which we have under consideration. The description of the day of the Lord in these five passages is progressive. In the first passages before us now the fact that the day is coming is mentioned, and what that day is; what events and signs come before and what follows after is revealed in the other passages.

The difficulty appears, however, in the statement that the day of Jehovah is near. From this some have concluded, inasmuch as that great day was not near in Joel's day, but still in the distant future, that Joel spoke of another day. The difficulty is completely overcome by remembering that his vision

starting with the locust calamity in his own day, concerns the last days. Of his predictions it is true what the Lord said to another Prophet. "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but *at the end* it shall speak, and lie not; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Hab. ii:3). Joel giving by inspiration a description of what is to come upon Israel's land in *the future* when the day of the Lord is near speaks of that day as about to come. As already stated in the midst of the description of what the locusts had done to the land, the prophetic type of Gentile invasion and destruction, the day of the Lord looms up before the prophetic vision of the Prophet and with a Woe! he announces the sure coming of that day, though it was yet afar off.

As this passage is one of the first in which God's Spirit announces the great day, it is in order to show how the prophets after Joel had visions which enlarge upon Joel's descriptions.* This we may

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*The statements of Higher Criticism that the later Prophets copied from Joel and added their conceptions, etc., must be dismissed as contrary to the inspiration of the Prophets. Each spoke and wrote independently of each other. They did not copy but gave revelations. The unity of their testimony is sufficient evidence of their inspiration. See "Harmony of the prophetic Word" by A. C. Gaebelein.

well do for these visions will soon be all fulfilled. God is going to do what He promised by the mouth of all His holy prophets. We see that long promised and predicted day approaching (Heb. x:25).

Isaiah. This great Prophet has much to say in his vision about the day of the Lord. He describes through the Spirit of God both the judgments which are connected with that day and the blessings which will come for Jerusalem and the nations as well as creation. The phrase "in that day" is often found in this Prophet. We recommend the reading and *literal* interpretations of a few passages in which Isaiah speaks of this day of the Lord. Chapters ii:2-5; ii:10-22; ii:16-26; iv; xi; xii; xiii:6-13; xxiv-xxvii; xxxiv; xxxv. The many predictions of Jerusalem's blessing and restoration of Israel as found in chapters liv, lx, lxi, lxii and others stand all in relation to that day.

Jeremiah. He, too, speaks of that day and its related events though his great mission was in another direction. Read chapters xxv:30-33; xxx:18-24.

Ezekiel. This great prophetic book has much to say about the day of the Lord. Chapters vii, xxiv, are especially pointed out. From chapters xxxvii-xlviii we have the record of great events both of

judgment and of glorious blessings, which will be fulfilled immediately before and during the day of the Lord.

Daniel. While this Prophet does not use Joel's phrase "the day of the Lord" nearly all of his great prophecies are connected with that great day. The history of the times of the Gentiles is found here prewritten as well as their end, a great catastrophe, in the day when the stone cut out without hands falls from heaven and smites the image, the typical presentation of the times of the Gentiles. Chapter ii.

Hosea. Hosea's testimony is on the rejection of Israel and Judah. He announces also the day of the Lord. Chapter xi:9-11.

Amos. This Prophet prophesied a brief time after Joel, and he likewise gives witness of the coming day. Chapters i:2, vi:3, ix:11-15.

Obadiah. He lived about the time of Joel. In the short prophecy he wrote he speaks of the day. Read verse 15.

Micah. The fifth chapter refers in part to the future. Chapter v:15 is "that day."

Nahum. He prophesied about the wicked city Nineveh, a prediction of how God will deal with

the wicked cities of the nations in a future day. Chapter i:1-9.

Habakkuk. The third chapter, that marvelous revelation, is a description of "that day."

Zephaniah. He speaks almost exclusively of the day and its attending manifestations. Chapters i:14-18, ii and iii.

Haggai. His words, chapter ii:6, 7, concern that day. See Hebrews xii:26-29.

Zechariah. Here we find a very complete revelation of the great coming day. A careful reading of the last three chapters of this Prophet of glory will show the constant occurrence of these three significant words "in that day." It is most interesting and inspiring reading, a complete confirmation of all the preceding testimony beginning with Joel.

Malachi. The coming day in this last Old Testament prophetic book is revealed in chapters iii:1-3, iv:1-3.

We learn from all this what a prominent place the day of the Lord occupies in all these prophetic writings. Joel with the other Prophets beheld that day as coming from the Almighty. The Jehovah, who is to be manifested in that great day, is our

Lord Jesus Christ. In Him and through Him all these judgments will be carried out in the day of His second coming. The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son (John v:22). That appointed day in which God will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained (the Lord Jesus Christ) is rapidly approaching (Acts xvii:31). The same exalted Lord will also bring the promised blessing in that day. This day of the Lord of whom Joel speaks is repeatedly mentioned in the New Testament. It always concerns the earth, God's ancient people, the nations and *never* the true church. The *day of Christ* as exclusively revealed in the New Testament is the day which concerns the true church of God, the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ. Before the day of the Lord begins as well as before the great tribulation sets in, the church will go to her destined home in the presence of the Lord. All this we cannot follow here in its blessed details.

Is not the food cut off before our eyes?
From the house of our God joy and gladness.—(Verse 16.)

These words revert to the calamity which had visited the land. The exclamation of the Prophet contained in the previous verse, in which he announced the coming of the day of the Lord,

should be treated as a parenthesis. The description of the result of the locust invasion is taken up again and the prophet does not continue to speak of the great and terrible day of the Lord. This verse takes together in two sentences all which had been previously mentioned. The physical and spiritual want of the land and the people are here tersely pictured. There was no food. As we learned from the preceding verses the locusts had stripped the whole land. An awful famine was the result of the invasion. The different offerings and sacrifices and the joy and gladness connected with them (Deut. xii:7, xvi:10, 11) had come to an end. There was a great spiritual dearth. All this predicted the future condition of the land and the people as it has been and still is during the times of the Gentiles, so often announced by the Prophets of God.

The prophetic book which follows Joel, the Prophet Amos, announces such conditions of the people, conditions which Joel so vividly and briefly pictures as having come upon the land of Judah. "I will turn your feasts into mourning and all your songs into lamentation; and I will hang up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof

as a bitter day. Behold the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord; and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the North even to the East, they shall run to and fro to seek the Word of the Lord, and shall not find it" (Amos viii:10-12). But the same Prophet also announces that this sad condition of the people is to undergo a mighty change. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God" (Amos ix:13-15). And Joel likewise at the close of his vision speaks of the future of blessing, which awaits Israel in the coming age when their land will be prosperous once more and joy and gladness, spiritual blessings will be restored to them.

The seeds have perished under their clods.
The garners become desolate.
The storehouses are broken down
For withered is the corn.
How the cattle groan!
The herds of oxen are bewildered,
For there is no feeding place for them,
Also the flocks of sheep are made to suffer.—(Verses 17-18.)

This is a continued description of the great calamity. It seems a drought at the same time had been visited upon the land so that the seed which had been sown could not spring up, it perished under the clods. There was no prospect for a future harvest. In consequence of this the garners became desolate and the storehouses were broken down. All this shows the greatness of the trouble which had come upon the people, a prophetic type of what should be upon future generations of that nation on account of their unbelief and disobedience. Animal creation shared in this, as it has shared in the fall of man and suffers with man (Exodus xii:29, Jon. iii:7). The cattle groaned, which reminds us of the blessed words of hope for groaning creation as given in our great epistle to the Romans (Rom. viii:19-23). All this we need not to explain further. Two more verses and we have reached the end of the first part of the prophecy of Joel.

V. The prayer of the Prophet.

"To Thee, Jehovah, I cry;
For the fire hath consumed the goodly places of the desert
And a flame hath burned all the trees of the field.
Also the cattle of the field look up unto Thee,
For the streams of water are dried up,
And a fire hath consumed the goodly places of the desert."—(Verses 19, 20.)

Besides the final description of the great distress, we have a word concerning Joel himself. He expresses his own feeling and attitude. It is but one sentence, but it tells us much. "To thee, Jehovah, I cry." Joel was a man of prayer. No other mention is made by the Prophet of his own person, but this brief word is sufficient to give us a glimpse of his inner life and dependence on the Lord. In the midst of the distress, when misery and want held sway, when the cattle of the field, the oxen and sheep groaned, the Prophet cried unto Jehovah as His helper and knew Him as his refuge. Such a spirit of prayer and dependence characterized every one of these Prophets, the holy men of God. The Holy Spirit has marked this often. Habakkuk was a mighty man of prayer, full of faith and courage (Hab. i:2; iii:1, 16-19). Daniel prayed

and his prayer and answer are recorded. Jonah prayed and praised in the belly of the great fish (Jonah ii). Micah cried out: "Therefore, I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me" (Micah vii: 7). Joel cried to the Lord and appears as a kind of an intercessor in behalf of his stricken land. He is representing in this way the pious, God-fearing part of the nation. God always reserved for Himself a remnant in the midst of His earthly people, a remnant which still trusts in Him and in His Word. This is true of all periods of the great history of God's ancient people. In the times of Elijah when that prophet thought he was left alone, God had seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to Baal but worshipped Jehovah. The New Testament tells us that even at this time there is a remnant according to the election of Grace. In Malachi's day the corruption of the nation was great, yet there was a trusting and believing remnant. "Then they that feared the Lord spoke often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon the Lord" (Mal. iii:17). It will be so in the future. The last days of dispersed Israel will be days of

trouble. The great tribulation is called "the time of Jacob's trouble." Then when trouble is in the land, when once more the hand of the Lord will rest heavy upon them and mighty Gentile enemies and not locusts, as we shall find in the next chapter, shall invade the land, then a faithful remnant will like Joel cry unto Jehovah and He will answer them. Joel in his attitude of dependence on the Lord for deliverance represents this faithful remnant.

We sum up briefly the contents of this first chapter. Joel gives an inspired description of the locusts, which had in their four stages through which they passed, laid the land waste and changed the beautiful land into a desolate wilderness. The locusts were sent as a judgment from God and through their work even the sacrifices and offerings ceased, so that Israel was destitute of the appointed way to worship God. This locust invasion, though a literal one, has a prophetic meaning. It shows, as we have tried to explain, the times of the Gentiles during which Israel's land suffers in the same way and the judgment of God rests upon it.

With the next chapter we shall learn from the Prophet's vision the great day of the Lord, which he announced so briefly in the first part of his vision.

CHAPTER II.

With the second chapter we reach the heart of the great prophecy of Joel. The description of the literal locusts, which had come upon the land and devoured everything, so vividly shown in the first chapter, is not continued in the second chapter. That these locust swarms in their different stages prefigured nations who were to come in upon Israel's land and lay everything waste, we have learned. Dispensationally the first chapter would stand for the entire times of the Gentiles. These began with Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. ii:36-38) and they continue till the time when the God of heaven sets up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. That will be when the stone cut out of the mountain without hands falls upon the kingdoms and breaks them to pieces, in other words, the second Coming of Christ (Dan. ii:44, 45 and Dan. vii:13, 14). During these times of the Gentiles Israel's land is the prey of the Gentiles as the land was the prey of the locusts in the days of Joel. This is why the literal locusts are made so prominent in the beginning of the vision of the seer of the Lord's day.

In our study of the first chapter we learned that in the midst of the description of the havoc wrought by the locusts, the prophet beheld a greater judgment advancing and he announced in a single exclamation the Day of the Lord. The prominence this great future day, when Jehovah is manifested visibly, occupies in the different prophetic books we have seen. The description of that great day is now taken up in the vision of Joel. The Day of the Lord is the burden of both the second and third chapters. There can be no doubt whatever that the complete fulfilment of what Joel describes as God's Prophet in these two chapters has not yet taken place and that its accomplishment falls in the time of the great day of the Lord. Before that day comes, when the Lord appears, the greatest distress will be upon the land and the people; there will be a time of trouble such as never was before nor ever will be after (Matt. xxiv:21). The remnant of His people will cry to the Lord for intervention and for deliverance, and the Lord will answer their cry and come to deliver His people. As a result of His coming His earthly people will be delivered, their land becomes once more like the garden of Eden, there will be a great outpouring of the Spirit of God and from Jerusalem the great centre of the kingdom the blessings will extend to

the nations. At the same time the day of the Lord will mean judgment for the nations who have dealt wickedly with His earthly people. All these different events which group themselves around the day of the Lord, both before and after the manifestation of the Lord we find in these two chapters, the remainder of the Book of Joel. However, with this we do not say that this great prophecy had no meaning for the people and their children who listened first of all to this solemn message. It was surely meant to warn the people of a great trouble which was soon to come upon them. A great invasion of the land by one coming from the North, the Assyrian, was to happen, and to this Assyrian invasion the prophecy undoubtedly referred in part at least. But that Assyrian invasion, which is made so prominent in the Book of Isaiah, is but a picture of that great future invasion of the land, when the Assyrian of the end-time falls into Palestine. The same is true about the miraculous deliverance which Israel in the past experienced, when after the prayer and repentance of the people, the invading army was checked and in one night an end was made of the proud army of Sennacherib (Isa. xxxvii:34-38). It is a prophetic type of what will happen to that foe who comes once more from the North to spoil the people at the end of the age.

Most interpreters of the second chapter of Joel maintain that he still pictures locusts. We just say a brief word on this. The word "locust" is not mentioned at all in the first part of the second chapter. It occurs in the second part when the Prophet gives the predictions of restoration, and there he declares that the damage of the locusts is to be repaired and that the Lord will restore the years which the locusts have eaten. This undoubtedly refers to a return of the fruitfulness of the land; it means the restoring of all the blessings which the land had forfeited during the times of the Gentiles. In this second chapter a great invading army is described under the figure of the locusts, which in their large numbers, their orderly advance, their fearful devastation and for different other reasons are well adapted to prefigure such an army.

The scene of this second chapter in its future fulfilment is during that time of trouble which precedes the glorious manifestation of the Lord. It necessitates the restoration of a part of the people to the land and a resumation of the ancient ceremonials, such as the blowing of the trumpets. Such a restoration in unbelief is indicated in the prophetic Word and is even now at the present time in process.

The chapter before us contains seven parts, giving the events of the day of the Lord preceded by trouble and bringing blessing, temporal and spiritual, to His earthly people Israel. The church, the reader will understand is nowhere mentioned, nor even indicated. It concerns only His earthly people, and in the third chapter the nations. The church is no longer on earth when these mighty events take place, but she is to be manifested with the Lord in His glorious appearing.

The seven parts of the chapter are the following:

I. The sounding of the alarm. The day of Jehovah is at hand (Verses 1, 2).

II. The description of the invading army from the North. Their advance and the destruction it brings (Verses 3-11).

III. The second blowing of the trumpet. The great repentance of the people, the prayer to Jehovah to spare His people (Verses 12-17).

IV. The prophetic word "Then." The great change and how it is brought about (Verse 18).

V. Promises of Restoration and the removal of the northern army; the early and the latter rain. The end of Israel's tribulation. They are never to be ashamed (Verses 19-27).

VI. The outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh. Wonders in heaven and on earth (Verses 28-31).

VII. Salvation in Jerusalem and in Zion for the residue whom the Lord shall call.

I. The blowing of the trumpet in Zion; the day of the Lord cometh.

"Blow the trumpet in Zion
And sound an alarm in my holy mountain,
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,
Because the day of the Lord cometh,
For it is near at hand.

A day of darkness and of gloom,
A day of clouds and gross darkness,
As the dawn spread upon the mountains;
A great people and a strong;
There hath not been ever the like,
Neither shall be any more after them,
To the years of many generations."—(Verses 1, 2.)

"The day of Jehovah cometh—it is at hand" is the startling announcement the prophet makes again in this chapter. We have therefore in this chapter and the third chapter a description of the day of Jehovah, when He comes to deliver His earthly people out of the hands of the enemy who invades Israel's land in the latter day, when He interferes in behalf of His inheritance. It bears repeating that the great prophecy which

is before us had a partial fulfilment in the past. The Assyrian power which fell into the land some time after this prophecy was given was no doubt the primary object of these predictions, but never the fulfilment of it. Nor was the promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh as mentioned in this chapter fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, nor has it been fulfilled since that day. The day of Jehovah alone will accomplish all that the Prophet Joel beheld in this and the following chapter. It is well to be positive about this, for if we assume that future events are fulfilled or now during this present age in process of fulfilment, it will be disastrous. Our object in our studies is therefore to look at that great end: fulfilment of the vision of our Prophet. This is both interesting and timely. We stand upon the threshold of the greatest crisis since the beginning of the age and we see more and more that day approaching concerning which Joel bears witness, though we shall not see that day itself.

The chapter covers the last part of the second half of the 70th week of Daniel's great prophecy. To be clear and help such of our readers, who are beginners in the study of the Word of Prophecy we give a little synopsis of the 70-week prophecy as found in the prophet Daniel.

The reader will please turn to Daniel ix:24-27. Here we read: "Seventy weeks are apportioned out upon thy people (Daniel's people, the Jews) and upon thy holy city (Jerusalem), to close the transgression and to make an end of sins, and to make expiation for iniquity and to bring in the righteousness of ages, and to seal the vision and the Prophet, and to anoint the Holy of Holies." Seventy sevens as it is in the Hebrew, each week having seven years, makes 490 years. This space of time, as the heavenly messenger declared, is apportioned out for the people Israel and Jerusalem and at the close of it the full blessing will come for Israel. The term "the righteousness of the ages" refers to that age which we term the Millennium, because according to New Testament revelation the Lord Jesus Christ will reign over the earth with His saints for a thousand years.

Then we read in the prophecy of Daniel that these 70 weeks or 490 years are divided into three parts. First, seven weeks; secondly, sixty-two weeks; thirdly, one week. What does this division mean? We are not left to speculation for the Word makes it plain.

"Know therefore and understand: From the going forth of the Word to restore and to build

Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince, are seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. The street and the moat shall be built again, even in troublesome times. And after sixty-two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and shall have nothing; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end, therefore, shall be with an overflow, and unto the end war, the desolations determined" (Dan. ix:25, 26). The first seven weeks (49 years) is the period of time which elapsed from the giving of the command to rebuild Jerusalem and its walls till this was accomplished. The commission to restore and build Jerusalem was given to Nehemiah by Artaxerxes in his twentieth year. The sixty-two weeks (434 years) is the time from the complete restoration of the city and the walls till Messiah is cut off, that is the death of Christ, and there is nothing for Him. His own people rejected Him and then in consequence of that rejection the city and the sanctuary are to be destroyed by the people of the prince that shall come. Wars and desolations, persecutions and troubles, bloodshed and suffering is to be the lot of the Jewish people after the rejection of the Messiah, a prophecy given not only here, but throughout the prophetic Word.

How solemnly it has come true for hundreds and hundreds of years is sufficiently verified by the history of the Jews, a history of blood and tears. The people who destroyed the city and the sanctuary were the Romans. Now there is one week left, the seventieth week, or seven years. This week has not yet been. When at the end of the sixty-ninth week Messiah was cut off God's mercy, it is true, lingered for a time over Jerusalem in another offer of what they had rejected, but another age had begun. The Holy Spirit had come to earth and on the day of His coming the church, that mystery hidden in former ages, began. The events of that last week of seven years as given in Daniel ix, were never fulfilled. Between the sixty-ninth week and the seventieth week is a gap, which is the present age. As soon then as God's purpose in this age is accomplished (the calling of the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all) then the last week of Daniel will come to pass. That week is divided into two parts, twice three and a half years; the second half, or the last three years and a half are called the great tribulation and towards the end of that great tribulation falls the history and fulfilment of our chapter. The last chapter of the prophet Zechariah covers

about the same period only it gives us additional light upon these great coming events.

It is necessary that the Jewish people, at least in part, be brought to the land before all these events can happen. This return will be in unbelief, though in the midst of them there will be a Godfearing remnant, who tremble at His Word (Is. lxvi:5), and who suffer intensely in that evil day. That remnant will increase and become more and more numerous as that great day of the Lord draws nearer. One in the power of Elijah will witness during that tribulation period as it is written, "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. iv:5, 6). All this falls into the last seven years.

For the accomplishment of what is revealed in our chapter a partial restoration of the Jews to their land, the rebuilding of the temple, the resumption of the sacrifices and the exercise of the functions of the priesthood, the different ceremonies as commanded in the law of Moses are absolutely necessary. But we may add, what is one of the most, if not the most significant sign

of the times, that such a return of the Jews as demanded by our chapter and similar other portions of prophecy, is at present going on. Not alone has the way been opened for the return of thousands of Jews to the land of their fathers, but Zionism is through its appointed leaders in closest touch with the Sultan, who seems to be ready to make the largest concessions, greater than the most sanguine Zionists ever dared to hope. The national establishment of a part of the Jewish race upon the soil of Palestine is the tremendous event in sight.*

All this should not surprise us, for the time for it has come, but it ought to stir our hearts as nothing else. Inasmuch as the complete restoration of part of the Jewish people cannot come as long as the church is on earth, it is evident that our gathering together unto Him, to meet Him in the air must be very near.

We do not know if there will be an interval between the rapture of the church and the beginning of the last week of Daniel, and if there is such an interval, how long it will last, we do not know and cannot find anything in the Word to warrant statements, which are often made.

*The recent young Turk movement favors Zionism and has pledged itself to support it.

It is during the last portion of that prophetic period, which winds up the Jewish age, that the events here before us transpire.

The first thing mentioned is the blowing of the trumpet in Zion, the sounding of the alarm. This was an Old Testament ceremony commanded to His people by the Lord. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them; that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps" (Numbers x:1, 2). This was the first use of the trumpets. Then we read also: "And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then shall ye blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies" (Verse 9). The trumpets were to be blown by the priests; they are therefore here addressed. The blowing of the trumpet is an alarm because the day of Jehovah is about to come and the forerunner, so to speak, is the invading army of the North.

The faith of the pious remnant suffering in the midst of the confusion of that time, when the false Christ will sit in the temple and all the desolation and abomination will be in the midst of the city,

will lay hold of that gracious promise given by the Lord that He will remember and save them from their enemies. Indeed the time is then come to have mercy upon Zion; their hour is come. The alarm is to be sounded as the sign of the approach of events of the most startling character; first the invasion of a mighty army and next the interference of Jehovah. What strange and often ridiculous things interpreters will say on such passages of Scripture is learned when one reads that some of the expositors declare that the trumpets were blown with a strong sound to "frighten away the locust swarms and divert their flight from the city and the surrounding country."

We only mention that trumpets, the sound of the trumpet, etc., are often connected with the Theophany, the appearing of the Lord. We read of it in different ways and in Isaiah it is written: "And it shall come to pass in that day that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come that were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem" (Isaiah xxvii:13). That will be the trumpet blast with which the Lord will gather His earthly people together after He has come.

And now comes a more detailed description of

the coming day. It is a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and gross darkness. It is not at all necessary to think of the literal locusts here. It is a fact that these locust swarms are sometimes so large and composed of such an enormous multitude of insects that they obscure the light of the sun. We read in Exodus x that Moses said when he announced the plague of locusts to come upon Egypt: "And they shall cover the face of the earth that one cannot be able to see the earth." And when they came the record says: "For they covered the face of the whole earth so that the land was darkened" (Exod. xv:15). The darkness and the gloom as well as the clouds are symbolical of the solemnity of that approaching day.

Darkness, a hidden sun, is, as we know from the cross of our ever blessed Lord, a symbol of divine wrath. It has this meaning here; the clouds of judgment and wrath are gathering together, the day of vengeance is at hand. We must likewise remember that when Jehovah came in that great manifestation on Mount Sinai it is written: "Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was" (Exod. xx:21). "And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds and thick darkness" (Deut. iv:11).

David by the Spirit in looking back to that past Theophany, which is the type of the future coming manifestation of Jehovah, the second Coming of Christ, declares: "He made darkness His secret place; His pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the sky" (Psalms xviii: 11). Still another prophet announces that day in the same terms. "That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers" (Zeph. i:15, 16). In Isaiah, too, we read that when the Lord comes "darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people" (Isaiah lx:2). The meaning then is clear. Wrath, judgment, confusion is symbolically described by these terms, while no doubt when the day of Jehovah begins, a literal darkness will cover the earth.

But there is still another sentence left which we have not explained. That day, the day of Jehovah will be like "the dawn spread upon the mountains." We cannot accept the thought expressed by most interpreters that this sentence, "As the dawn spread upon the mountains," must be brought in connection with "a great people and a strong." We quote from one of the most able of these commentators.

"The subject is left indefinite: "Like morning dawn it is spread over the mountains." The prophet's meaning is evident enough from what follows. He clearly refers to the bright glimmer or splendor which is seen in the sky as a swarm of locusts approaches from the reflection of the sun's rays from their wings." In a footnote he quotes a phenomenon in connection with the locusts, which evidently bears out this interpretation. One Portuguese monk, Francis Alvarez, writes that the day before the arrival of the locusts "we could infer that they were coming, from a yellow reflection in the sky, proceeding from their yellow wings."

We think the words "as the dawn spread upon the mountains" have nothing to do with the description of the invading army, though that army is described with the previous literal locust plague in view, that is, under the type of a locust invasion. The words which follow "a great people and strong, there has not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after then, to the years of generations and generations" are, we take it, an exclamation preparing the way for the more detailed description of the invading army.

The words, "As the dawn spread upon the mountains," are a description of the day itself and not the invading army, which precedes that day. On the

one hand the day of Jehovah is a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and gross darkness; on the other hand it is a day "As the dawn spread upon the mountains." After the darkness and gloom, the light of that day dawn will break. Then it will be "even as a morning without clouds" (2 Sam. xxiii:4). Brightness, light and glory are repeatedly mentioned in connection with the day of Jehovah.

II. The description of the invading army.

A fire devoureth before them,
And behind them a flame burneth;
Before them the land is as the garden of Eden,
And behind them a desolate wilderness,
Yea, and nothing can escape them.

Their appearance is like the appearance of horses,
And like the horsemen shall they run.

Like the noise of chariots,
On the mountain tops, they shall leap,
Like the crackling of a flame of fire devouring the stubble,
Like a strong people set in battle array.

Before them the peoples are in distress
All faces turn to paleness.
They run like mighty men
They climb the wall like men of war;
And they march each one in his ways,
And they turn not aside from their ranks,

Nor doth one press upon another
A mighty one marches in the highroad.
They fall upon the dart, but are not wounded.

They spread themselves in the city,
They run along upon the wall,
They climb up into the houses,
They enter in by the windows like a thief.

The earth trembleth before them,
The heavens shake,
The sun and the moon are darkened,
And the stars withdraw their shining.

And Jehovah uttereth His voice before His army
For His camp is very great;
For strong is He that executeth His Word
For the day of Jehovah is great and very terrible
And who can bear it?—(Verses 3-11).

Before we look at the text itself, to make a careful study of it, we shall consider this invasion in a general way. A mighty army not of locusts but of men is described in these verses. The land was spoiled in Joel's day by the literal locusts, which had destroyed everything, and now an actual army is announced to come upon the land. Many armies have marched through Israel's land in the past and wrought terrible destruction. How truly may Israel say what is written in Psalm cxxix: "Many a time have they afflicted me from

my youth, may Israel now say; many a time have they afflicted me from my youth; yet they have not prevailed against me. The plowers plowed upon my back; they made long their furrows." And equally may they declare "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side; when men rose up against us; then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us; then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul, then the proud waters had gone over our soul. Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth" (Psalm cxxix:2-6). Verily it has been true and will ever be true "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn" (Isaiah lv:17). But who of the many enemies of God's beloved earthly people is here meant? As we have already stated the Assyrian. This great enemy of God's chosen people, how he was used of God as an instrument to discipline His people, how God dealt with him, is mentioned prominently in the prophecy of Isaiah. But the Assyrian, as he came upon Israel in the past, is a prophetic type of a more powerful Northerner, the Assyrian, who invades the land and besieges Jerusalem immedi-

ately before the Lord comes in great power and glory.

Many believers in the premillennial coming of the Lord and the restoration of Israel do not see clearly in regard to this last great enemy and therefore much is hazy. Generally people speak simply of the Anti-Christ and all passages in the Old Testament which speak of invaders and enemies of Israel are classed as predicting the Anti-Christ. This is far from being correct. The Anti-Christ will not be the only person acting under satanic impulses and powers during the last week of Daniel. There is another head, the head of the revived Roman Empire. Daniel vii:23-27; ix:27. He is mentioned in the book of Revelation as the beast rising out of the sea and also ascending out of the bottomless pit. The Anti-Christ is a different person from the first beast; he is seen rising out of the earth and has two horns like a lamb and speaks like a dragon (Rev. xiii:11). Of him we read in Isaiah xxx:33; Daniel xi:36, and in other passages we read of him.*

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*The reader will find a chapter in our "Harmony of the Prophetic Word" devoted to these different persons and the part they will play in the end-time.

Then there will be the last Assyrian coming from the North. While the first beast will be the head of the political power and confederacy of nations and the Anti-Christ, the man of sin will be in Jerusalem and take his place in the temple and by lying wonders show himself that he is God, the Assyrian will come from the outside and come against the people and Jerusalem. Isaiah xxix:1-8 gives us a description of this siege. Zechariah xiv: 1-6 gives the same prediction and shows how the Lord will intervene. Of his end we read also in Daniel xi:45.

There is likewise the description of Gog and Magog in Ezekiel xxxviii and xxxix. In all this we cannot enter fully here.

The Assyrian coming from the North will make a terrible invasion and lay siege to Jerusalem towards the end of the great tribulation. It will be, indeed, the heights of that time of Jacob's trouble, for while the Anti-Christ is inside tormenting the people, the Assyrian will be outside. Most instructive is the tenth chapter in Isaiah. While it refers to the Assyrian, who came to Israel's land, it is a perfect picture of what will happen in the future. Notice six parts in Isaiah x:5 to the close of the chapter.

1. A description of the Assyrian (Verses 5-11).

He is described as the instrument which God uses to punish Israel. He is the rod of God's anger and God sends him against a hypocritical nation. 2. The punishment of the Assyrian is announced (Verses 12-15). The time for the punishment is when the Lord hath performed His whole work upon Mount Zion and Jerusalem. This shows that it must be in the future. 3. The Punishment itself (Verses 16-19). It will be sudden and complete. 4. The Return of the remnant of Israel is promised (Verses 20-23). Then there is the Word of Comfort to the Remnant (Verses 24-27). 6. A vivid description of the march of the Assyrian against Jerusalem and the intervention of the Lord (Verses 28-34). Sennacherib's army completely overthrown in the presence of Jerusalem is a prophetic picture of what will happen to the last Assyrian. In Isaiah xiv:25 we read: "I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot; then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders." Again God says concerning this mighty army of the Assyrian in his terrible onslaught against Jerusalem: "Moreover, the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away; yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly. Thou

shalt be visited of the Lord of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire. And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel (Jerusalem), even all that fight against her and her munition, and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night vision" (Isaiah xxix:5-7). We find this Assyrian also mentioned in Micah v:5.

The army which Joel beholds in the beginning of the second chapter coming against Jerusalem is the Assyrian, approaching from the North. This is clearly seen from the 20th verse, where we read, "And I will remove far off from you him that cometh from the North" Joel ii:20; Isaiah x; xxix:1-7; Zechariah xiv, and similar passages should be carefully studied together, for they give us the same event only each in a different way. And now we turn to a study of the details as given in these verses.

In the third verse we read that a fire devoureth before them and behind them a flame burneth. The expositors who apply all this to literal locusts have great difficulty to explain the meaning of these words. There is no such difficulty if we look upon the entire description as having nothing more to do with the literal swarms of locusts, which devastated the land as we saw in the first chapter. An army of invaders uses the torch; be-

fore them and behind them the fire burns. Such scenes of devastation, burning down castles, country residences, villages, etc., were lately seen in the revolutionistic outbreaks in Russia. Of greater difficulty are the words "Before them the land is as the garden of Eden, and behind them a desolate wilderness." According to this Israel's land will have to be again in a prosperous condition, be like the garden of Eden. That this will be the future condition of Palestine is predicted in the prophetic Word elsewhere. "For the Lord shall comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places, and He will make her wilderness like Eden and her desert like the garden of the Lord . . ." (Isaiah li:4). In the great restoration chapter of the Prophet Ezekiel, that is chapter xxxvi, we find a similar prophecy. "And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden, and the waste and the desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited" (Ezek. xxxvi:35).

These two prophecies tell us that Palestine will be the garden spot of the earth. Just as the Lord had made the garden of Eden the choicest place in all His creation, for Adam and his wife to enjoy, so in the coming age Israel's land will be the most blessed, the most beautiful, the most glorious of all the lands of the earth. Of this Proph-

ecy has much to say. But this glorious condition of the land will be the result of the second Coming of Christ and also the changes which take place in the land itself, such as are indicated in Zechariah xiv:4-10. In our passage here in Joel the statement that the land is like the garden of Eden does not refer to that prosperous condition, which will be during the Millennium. The events pictured here are premillennial, preceding the Coming of the Lord. The easiest way to dismiss the difficulty would be, as some have done, by saying that the words are a mere figure of speech to describe the great havoc which this army works. This does not satisfy us. We believe that the land of Israel, Palestine, will be really in a prosperous condition when the army from the North comes upon it. The land will enjoy once more great prosperity and will be the center of commerce and influence, so that the Jews will call it their "garden of Eden." Everything that God has promised and that which He will do is more or less imitated by Satan. Before the true time of peace and righteousness comes, called the Millennium, and brought about by the coming of the Prince of Peace, the devil will have a mock millennium. He is now at this very thing, and ere long there will be something on earth which looks like universal peace, when people will say "Peace

and Safety." So the enemy imitates the true restoration of Israel by a counterfeit restoration. The Zionistic movement has not only paved the way for this but is that restoration itself. Palestine is soon to be the center of commerce and widespread influence. Jewish capital, uncountable in its millions, is ready to back up the great national scheme. Agriculture and colonization is doing much for the land. But recently we read that around Jaffa the smell from the blossoms of the large orange groves was so strong that people were obliged to close their windows. There is a wonderful progress noticeable throughout that land. As soon as the land becomes more populated by its true owners (which may be the question of a few years), and colonization and irrigation advances, as well as with the accomplishment of planned commercial enterprises, the land will become for the Jews "like the garden of Eden." It will be at that time when the restoration in unbelief, the proud, self confident schemes of the still unbelieving people will be an accomplished fact, that the greatest calamity that land ever saw will come upon it. This calamity, preceding the visible manifestation of Jehovah, is here described. The invading army from the North, the northern enemy of Israel, will lay the land waste and desolate once more. It is a signifi-

cant fact that the great northern power, the Russian Empire, not only is the enemy of Israel but also has great aspirations for Palestine and Jerusalem.

There is no need to follow the description of this invading army in detail.* The description is very graphic. The artillery is described, as well as the chariots. Their march in battle array, how they advance in perfect order. They climb walls, climb into the houses and into the windows. The distress of the people is pictured; all faces turn to paleness. We also read, "A mighty One marches in the high-road;" they will have a leader.

The last two verses of the section under consideration need some further attention.

"The earth trembleth before them,
The heavens shake,
The sun and the moon are darkened,
And the stars withdraw their shining.
And Jehovah uttereth His voice before His army,
For His camp is very great;
For strong is he that executeth His Word,
For the day of Jehovah is great and very terrible,
And who can bear it?"

These words make the interpretation that literal locusts are meant well nigh an impossibility. Yet an attempt has been made, while others have said that Joel merely describes a storm which came when

*Compare also with Rev. ix.

the trouble had reached its height and put an end to the locust plague. The trembling earth, the shaking of the heavens, darkened sun, moon and stars are always mentioned in connection with the manifestation of the Lord. "Therefore will I shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the day of the Lord" (Is. xiii:13). "At His wrath the earth shall tremble" (Jerem. x:10). Similar words are found in Ezek. xxxii:7-8; Isaiah xxiv:19-23; Matthew xxiv:29. For this reason the words here in Joel must mean these physical signs of the approaching day of Jehovah. This is evident because in these verses the day of Jehovah is mentioned; "the day of Jehovah is great and very terrible and who can bear it?" With the great invasion, the fearful troubles which will then rest upon the land and the people, outward signs will herald the day itself. The army from the North is but an indication that the day of Jehovah is not far hence; the trembling earth, the shaking and darkened heavens announce something far greater which is going to happen. Jehovah's voice will be heard. That the invading army is called "His army" and that they execute His Word or command is to be explained by the former Assyrian power, which was used to humiliate the nation. In Isaiah x:5-6 we read the address of the Lord

to the Assyrian power. "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against a hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge to take the spoil and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets." The Lord used the Assyrian as an ax to hew down the pride of His people (Isaiah x:15). When the Lord announced to the prophet Habakkuk that He would punish His apostate people, He said, "For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling places, that are not theirs" (Hab. i:6). Then follows a description similar to the description of the invading army in Joel's prophecy. The prophet Habakkuk in answering Jehovah said, "O Lord thou hast ordained them for judgment" (Hab. i:12).

God used these nations for a purpose, in the punishment of His people and when the Assyrian was lifted up with pride, He broke him to pieces. In the same way will the northern army, the last Assyrian, be an instrument in the hand of the Lord against His people and in this sense they will be "His army" and "execute His Word." But when the Lord appears He will deal with these enemies of Israel on account of their wickedness. Zechar-

iah xii:2-3 will then be fulfilled. "Behold I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people; all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered against it."—"Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations as when He fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives" (Zech. xiv:3, 4).

After the description of the invading army, the great calamity at the close of the great tribulation which is still in store for Israel's land and the people we find in our chapter a solemn appeal of the Lord to the people to repent and the people's response to that appeal.

III. The second blowing of the trumpet. The great repentance of the people, the prayer to Jehovah to spare His people (Verses 12-17).

Yet even now, saith Jehovah,
Return unto me with all your heart,
With fasting and with weeping and with mourning.

And rend your heart and not your garments,
And return unto Jehovah your God,

For He is gracious and merciful,
Slow to anger and of great loving kindness,
And repenteth Him of the evil.

Who knoweth. He may return and repent,
And leave a blessing behind,
An oblation and a drink offering,
For Jehovah your God.—(Verses 12-14.)

This is one of the most interesting portions of this chapter. Jehovah calls once more to His people to repent. The word "return" means "to turn about," repent. This has been the call of Jehovah to His people Israel in the past. Moses and the prophets exhorted the people in Jehovah's name to turn unto Him and promised to the nation the greatest blessing. Then the Lord appeared in their midst, His message was to the nation, "Repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand." This message he gave to His disciples. After Pentecost there was a second appeal to the nation to repent.* But Israel rejected these gracious appeals and calls of the Lord. They fell and through their fall salvation has come to the Gentiles (Rom. xi:11). During the present age, salvation being offered to the Gentiles and the church being formed, the Jewish nation as such is in a blinded, impenitent state, wan-

*See our exposition of Acts iii in "Our Hope."

derers among the nations of the earth. The orthodox Jews read the great penitential psalms and have in their rituals sublime prayers of repentance, clothed in perfectly scriptural language and yet there is no true repentance and returning unto the Lord. And a great part of the Jewish people have rejected even these outward forms and have completely apostatized and become unbelievers. But there will come a time when a remnant of these will return unto the Lord. The unbelieving impenitent part of the nation will be cut off by judgments during the great tribulation. It is a mistake to think that all the Jews will repent and become heirs of the promises; still more serious is the teaching one meets so often in these days that "all Israel shall be saved" does not only mean all living Israelites believing and unbelieving, but that it also includes past generations who died in unbelief. During the awful period, the time of Jacob's trouble, with its attending judgments the nation will be sifted and immense numbers will be carried off the earth. This is clearly revealed in prophecy. "And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me, I will bring them forth out of the country, where they sojourn and they *shall not* enter into the land of Israel and ye shall know that I am the Lord" (Ez. xx:38). "And it shall come

to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die, but the third shall be left therein" (Zech. xiii:8, 9). Only the third part in the land will be left. The rest will be carried off in judgment.

A part of the nation will return unto Jehovah; it will be during the great tribulation. "I will go and return unto my place *till* they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me early. Come and let us return unto the Lord; for He hath torn and He will heal us; He hath smitten and He will bind us up" (Hosea v:15; vi:1). In this fundamental passage we read that Jehovah was in the midst of His people; He left them and went back to His place. This was fulfilled when the Lord Jesus was in their midst and left them returning to His place, to the Father from whom He came. But He has not gone to be there forever. There is a limit given. *"Till* they acknowledge their offence and seek my face." This means the repentance of the remnant of His people. Furthermore, we have the time specified when they will acknowledge their offence and seek His face. It will be "in their affliction"; this means the great coming affliction, Jacob's trouble (Jeremiah xxx:4-9). Then their prayer of repentance is recorded; "come and let us return unto the Lord." To this

same time refers Jehovah's appeal to His people here in Joel's prophecy. We also notice that there is a two-fold returning mentioned. The Lord says, "Return unto me," and the Lord will also return unto them, "He may return and repent." This return of the people and the returning of the Lord to them is mentioned in other parts of the Word. It stands in connection with the future events among that people. For instance in Deut. xxx:1-4, we have a great prophecy of the dispersion of the people Israel among *all* nations. This reaches beyond the Babylonian captivity and is the present dispersion of God's ancient people. Then we read the condition of their regathering. It is, "return unto the Lord" (verse 2). But there we read also that the Lord will return unto them. "Then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee" (Deut. xxx:3). In the last prophetic book with which the Old Testament closes, this vital statement is made again. "Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Mal. iii:7). Many other passages could be quoted which speak of the returning remnant of Israel in true repentance and of the Lord who returns unto them. "The remnant shall return, the

remnant of Jacob unto the mighty God. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return; the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness" (Is. x:21-22). This passage we mention especially for it is in connection with the invasion of the Assyrian, the same power which Joel saw prophetically invading the land.

This coming return of the people is to be genuine. They are not to rend their garments, but their hearts. The rending of the garments was an outward sign of excessive grief. This custom prevailed among other nations likewise. In the Word of God we find it mentioned in Gen. xxxvii:34; Numb. xiv:6; Josh. vii:6; 2 Sam. iii:31; 1 Kings xxi:27; 2 Kings xxii:11; Job ii:12; Ezra. ix:3. Yet this impressive custom, tearing a part of the garment covering the chest, was often nothing but an outward ceremony. Their repentance is to be deeper, a real heart return unto the Lord. The words:

> "For He is gracious and merciful,
> Slow to anger and of great loving kindness,
> And repenteth Him of the evil,"

refer us to Exo. xxxiv:5-9. Moses had a marvellous revelation of the Lord. He descended in a cloud, and made known the name of the Lord. His

graciousness and mercifulness is declared and that He is "abundant in goodness and truth." This is what has been revealed through our Lord Jesus Christ. Here in Joel is added "He repenteth Him of evil." Compare with Exo. xxxii:14 and 2 Sam. xxiv:16. But the passage in Exodus is here brought especially to our notice by the Holy Spirit because there is mention made of something which refers us to the Return of the Lord to be revealed to His earthly people and thereby to heal and to restore them. When Moses had heard this great declaration of Jehovah's name by Jehovah who had descended in a cloud, he said: "If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let the Lord. I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, take us for thine inheritance" (Exo. xxxiv:9). When the Lord returns then the iniquity and sin of Israel will be pardoned. The quotation from Exo. xxxiv. here in Joel is a reminder that Moses' burning desire will then be fulfilled.

The fourteenth verse expresses the hope of the repenting people. The Lord will return and leave a blessing behind. However their faith does not reach up to the promises of God. They expect only temporal blessing, which will make it possible to bring an oblation and drink offering.

But there will be much more.

Blow the trumpet in Zion,
Sanctify a fast.

Call out a solemn assembly,
Gather the people.
Sanctify a congregation.
Assemble the old men.
Gather the children,
And those that suck the breasts;
Let the bridegroom leave his chamber,
And the bride her closet;

Let the priests the ministers of Jehovah,
Weep between the porch and the altar
And let them say:—
"Spare Thy people, O Jehovah,
And give not thine heritage to reproach.
That the nations should rule over them,
Wherefore should they say among the peoples,
Where is their God?"—(Verses 15-17.)

Once more the trumpet is to be blown in Zion. This second blowing of the trumpet is different from the blowing in the beginning of the chapter. There it is to sound the alarm on account of the impending trouble, here it is to call the people together for a fast and a solemn assembly. It is the response to Jehovah's loving appeal, "return unto Me with all your heart." The people gather then in a great congregation to weep and mourn and to cry to Jehovah for deliverance. All classes

are called together, the old men as well as the children and even the suckling. In Deut. xxiv:5 we read: "When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business, but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife, which he hath taken." But here this law is not followed. The bridegroom and the bride must join the solemn assembly and fast and pray with the rest of the people. This then will be a great national lament and calling to the Lord for deliverance. When at last the deliverer comes and is revealed out of heaven, the event will be followed by another mourning. Zechariah xii:9-14 gives us a description of that event. The mourning is on account of Him whom they have pierced. It is that which Revelation i:7 mentions: "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so. Amen." Here in Joel it is a repentance and prayer for deliverance which precedes the manifestation of the pierced One. The language of the priests is especially mentioned. This shows that the order and service of the priests will be resumed during Israel's final struggle and at their final deliverance. The words of prayer, "Give not thine heritage to reproach, that the nations should rule

over them, wherefore should they say among the peoples, Where is their God?" are not found here exclusively. In other parts of the prophetic Word we read of prayers against the triumph of the nations. The great leader of the people Israel, Moses, was the first to employ similar words in pleading for the disobedient people (Exod. xxxii:12). God had promised Israel that they should be rulers over the nations; "thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee" (Deut. xv:6). But when they were disobedient then "He gave them into the hands of the nations; and they that hated them ruled over them" (Ps. cvi:41). Prophecy concerning their dispersion and shame among the nations has found its literal fulfilment. "And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kindgoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them" (Jer. xxiv:9). At last they will acknowledge this. In that great prophetic Psalm, the forty-fourth, which precedes the Psalm in which the King is seen appearing in majesty, we read this: "Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbors, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us. Thou makest us a byword among the nations, a shaking of the head among the people" (Ps. xliv:13-14).

Now the great mass of Jews believe that they are not scattered on account of their disobedience; that it is rather an honor than a dishonor to be among the nations. But the day which is described in this prophecy is the day when they will acknowledge their judgment and plead with Jehovah for deliverance. "Wherefore should the nations say, Where is now their God?" (Ps. cxv:2).

"Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Thy name, and deliver us and purge away our sins, for Thy name's sake. Wherefore should the nations say, Where is their God? Let Him be known among the nations in our sight by the revenging of the blood of Thy servants which is shed" (Ps. lxxix:9-10). Many similar prayers, besides the great prayer in Isaiah (chapter lxiii:17 and lxiv) could be quoted. In fact, many of the prayers for deliverance and punishment of the enemies which are recorded in the Book of Psalms, and so wrongly claimed by the rituals of Christendom, are all the prayers of the believing and returning remnant of Israel in the end of the age.

IV. The prophetic word "Then." The great change and how it is brought about. (Verse 18.)

> Then Jehovah will be jealous for His land,
> And will have pity on His people.—(Verse 18.)

With this verse we reach the great turning point

in Joel's prophecy. Up to this verse we have seen nothing but disaster, calamity and judgments. Literal locusts had devoured the land. These were types of nations which should prey upon Israel's land. The last great trouble was then seen by the prophet, and it resulted in the repentance of the remnant of Israel. No sooner have they acknowledged their offences and cried to the Lord, then the Lord will answer them. When the nations once more fall upon His people, when Gentile world powers in their domineering and arrogant pride rise up against the people Israel, when their power is gone (Deut. xxxii:36) and they turn with their hearts unto the Lord, *then* He will be jealous for His land and will pity His people. The same prophecy we find in the great post-exile prophet Zechariah. When the nations are at ease and help forward the affliction of His people, then the Lord is going to be jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy (Zech. i:12-17). How often the little word *"then"* is found in the prophetic Word marking the great change from Israel's judgment and rejection to deliverance and glory we cannot follow here. The following passages may be examined in connection with the 18th verse of our chapter. Is. xiv:25; xxiv:23; xxxii:16; xxxv:5, 6; lviii:8, 14; lx:5; lxvi:12; Ezek. xxviii:25-26; etc.

The personal manifestation of the Lord is here not mentioned, nor is it anywhere else in this prophet. But when He rises up to deliver His people and to answer their prayers, He is manifested in person. "*Then* shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem" (Zech. xiv:3-4). "When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in Glory" (Ps. cii:16). The first step towards the building up of Zion, the restoration of all things as revealed by the prophets, will be when the Lord answers the cries of His people and when He deals with their enemies; He will answer them by His own personal and glorious appearing. Thus will be fulfilled what is written in Isaiah lx:2. "For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall rise on thee and His glory shall be seen upon thee."

The two actions of the Lord in Joel ii:18 are Jehovah's jealousy and Jehovah's pity. The jealousy will be vengeance upon His enemies, which are the enemies of Israel; His mercy will return to His downtrodden people and the land, so significantly called "Immanuel's land" (Is. viii:8). The day of vengeance will then have come, but also the blessed

day when comfort will be given to them that mourn, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness (Is. lxi:2-3). Moses in his great prophetic song (Deut. xxxii) speaks of the Lord's jealousy and His mercy. At the close of his testimony the Spirit of God declares, "Rejoice, O ye nations, with His people; for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and will render vengeance to His adversaries, and will be merciful to His land and to His people" (Deut. xxxii:43). The Lord arises and His divine intervention will make an end of the enemies. "The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, He shall stir up jealousy like a man of war; He shall cry, yea, roar; He shall prevail against His enemies" (Is. xlii:13). Many more predictions relating to this great event, written in the prophetic books and in the Psalms, might be quoted here. They will be fulfilled when the Lord comes in power and glory. The prayer in Isaiah lxiii:15 will then be answered. "Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of Thy holiness and of Thy glory. Where is Thy zeal and Thy strength, the soundings of Thy bowels and of Thy mercies toward me? Are they restrained?" *Then* the Lord will be jealous for His land and will have pity on His people.

V. Promises of Restoration and the removal of the northern army; the early and the latter rain. The end of Israel's tribulation. They are never to be ashamed. (Verses 19-27.)

And Jehovah will answer and say to His people:
Behold I am sending to you the corn,
The new wine and the oil,
And ye shall be satisfied therewith,
And I will no longer make you,
For a reproach among the nations.

And I will remove afar from you the One from the North,
And will drive him into a dry and desolate land,
His face toward the Eastern sea,
His rear toward the Western sea,
And his stench shall rise,
And his ill odor shall ascend,
For he hath lifted himself up to do great things.
—(Verses 19, 20.)

And now we have the comfortable words in detail. What Jehovah will answer to His people is now fully made known. He will send the corn, the new wine and the oil. Earthly blessings will come upon them again. Israel's land will become once more the fruitful land, yea, more fruitful than ever before. There is no need to spiritualize these terms, corn, new wine and oil. We must leave them stand as they are. The promise is the same as in the Prophet

Hosea. "And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel" (Hos. ii:21-22). To the herdsman of Tekoa, Amos, was given the same promise. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall *no more* be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God" (Amos ix:13-15). The reproach which they were among the nations will then cease. Scattered in the corners of the earth they became a reproach and a byword. But Israel's calling is to be the head among the nations (Deut. xxviii:13). This will be realized in that coming day, when the Lord will bring again the captivity of His people. Then the reproach will be removed. "Neither will I cause to hear in thee the shame of the heathen any more, neither shalt thou bear the reproach of the people

any more, neither shalt thou cause thy nation to fall any more, saith the Lord Jehovah" (Ez. xxxvi:15). Then the Lord will restore double to His people. "For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Fear not! for thou shalt not be ashamed; neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more" (Is. liv:3-4).

A number of interpreters, in fact nearly all, claim that God fulfilled these promises when the remnant of Israel came back from Babylon. But such an interpretation is impossible on account of certain words. "No longer"—"any more"—"no more!" After the Babylonian captivity blessings came upon the returning remnant, but now again they are scattered in the great dispersion. When they are regathered and blest, then they will *no longer* be a reproach, they will *no more* be scattered, they shall *no more* be plucked out of their land.

The 20th verse shows another great action of Jehovah. By His power and in His manifestation He will remove far the One from the North, that is the northern army, the Assyrian of the end-time. Thus He broke the Assyrian once and overthrew his proud army. So He will do in the future

when the One from the North will trouble Israel again. Some who hold to the literal locust theory, that the locust invasion is meant, claim that locust swarms come sometimes from the North, and that heavy winds carry these insects into the sea. Such a meaning is impossible. It is said of the One from the North, "for he hath lifted himself up to do great things." This could not mean locusts, but it is descriptive of the pride of the Assyrian. (See Hab. i:10-11 and Is. x:10-15.) The end of the invader will be a terrible one; he will be driven into the land of desolation and not into the Dead sea or the Mediterranean sea.

Fear not, O Land,
Be glad and rejoice,
For Jehovah doeth great things.
Fear not, ye beasts of the field!
For the pastures of the desert spring forth,
The tree beareth her fruit,
The fig tree and the vine give their strength.
—(Verses 21, 22.)

And now the land is addressed not to fear but to rejoice and be glad. Even the beasts of the field are thus addressed, for they are to share the blessings which will then come from the Lord. The trees once more bear fruit. The figtree and the vine give their strength. Jehovah Himself doeth all these

things. By His own merciful power He brings it to pass.

All these wonderful things in store for Israel and Israel's land as revealed in these great prophecies are Jehovah's doings. The land is to be glad and to rejoice "for Jehovah doeth great things." (Verse 21.) To that Jehovah, whose gifts and calling are without repentance (Rom. xi:29), the Jewish people must look in the end for deliverance and flee to Him in true repentance. When that is the case, as our exposition has shown, the Lord will be jealous for His land and pity His people. (Verse 18.) But now they are very far from that, with perhaps a very small number among them, who still expect relief and blessing by the coming of the promised Messiah. They look to their own strength and wisdom. Zionism, human leaders and at present the "young Turk movement" are the foundations upon which their hopes rest. These foundations will all be swept away during the time of great tribulation. "Their feet shall slide in due time; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them shall make haste" (Deut. xxxii:35). This is the prediction given through Moses concerning that time when disaster overtakes them. But when they see "that their power is gone" (Deut. xxxii:36), and they look to Jehovah and cry to Him

out of their distress, He will answer them and arise in all His majestic power to deliver His heritage. "See now that I, even I am He, and there is no god with me. I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal, neither is there any that can deliver out of my hands." The last stanza of Moses' great song, after the day of their calamity is passed, reveals the same blessing for the land and restoration of His people, as seen by Joel. "Rejoice O ye nations, with His people; for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and will render vengeance to His adversaries, and will be merciful unto His land and to His people." (Verse Deut. xxxii:43.)

Ye children of Zion, be glad and rejoice
In Jehovah your God;
For He giveth you the early rain in righteousness,
He causeth to descend for you the showers
The early and latter rain as before.—(Verse 23.)

The children of Zion, which means the inhabitants of the land, will then rejoice and be glad. Their joy will be in the Lord, who has arisen and had mercy on Zion. The rain is especially mentioned. The early and latter rain as before comes again upon the land. In the next verses the result of the rain is described, that is, a return of the former fruitfulness of the land.

This phrase "the early and latter rain" has of late been strangely misapplied. It has been claimed that the terms early and latter rain have a spiritual significance. The early rain, it is said, means the first day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out. The "latter rain" these people tell us, is another Pentecost, a greater manifestation of the Holy Spirit. The early rain, they teach, took place in the beginning of the age and now as the age is about to close the latter rain is falling. This latter rain consists, according to their conception, in a restoration of "pentecostal gifts," and is evidenced by being able to talk in different tongues. To what sorts of fanaticism and delusion this fantastic interpretation (if it can be called that), has led we do not follow now.

Nowhere in the Bible is there warrant for us to believe that "the early and latter rain" has a spiritual significance. To say that the early rain and the latter rain typify blessings and manifestations of the Spirit of God, peculiar to the opening of this present age and to its close, is extremely fanciful and cannot be verified by the Scriptures. It is strange that even men who seem to possess considerable light have endorsed this kind of exposition, which has worked such harm among so many Christian people. There is absolutely no prediction any-

where in the New Testament, that the present age is to close with "a latter rain" experience, a time when the Holy Spirit again is poured out and that in greater measure. This age, according to divine revelation, ends in apostasy and complete departure from God and His truth (2 Thess. ii:3-12). After the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, for the formation of the church, the body of Christ, there is nowhere to be found a promise in the church epistles that another outpouring is to take place, by which a part of the church is to get into possession again of the different sign gifts. The enemy of souls has made good use of these distorted teachings to bring in his most subtle delusions.

Now what then is the meaning of "the early and latter rain?" It has a purely literal meaning with absolutely no spiritual significance or application. God gave to His earthly people promises of earthly blessings. The land He has given to them as a possession was a fruitful land, a land "flowing with milk and honey." The early and latter rain were periodical rainfalls in great abundance on which the fruitfulness of the land depended. They fell in the fall and then the parched ground was revived and prepared for the receiving of the seed, while the later showers of the spring helped the ripening crops

of the field. The withholding of the early and latter rain was a sign of God's displeasure, because it resulted in a complete failure of the crops and in famine. The return of the rain was a sign of Jehovah's blessing and favor. In this way the early and latter rain is mentioned in different parts of the Bible. "If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them, then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit" (Levit. xxvi:4). "And it shall come to pass, if ye hearken diligently unto my commandments, which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give you the rain upon your land in due season, the early rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full. Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside and serve other gods, and worship them. And then the Lord's wrath be kindled against you, and He shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the Lord giveth you." (Deut. xi:14-17.) Solomon is his dedicatory prayer mentioned this

literal rain. "When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray towards this place, and confess Thy Name, and turn from their sin, when Thou afflictest them. Then hear Thou in heaven, and forgive the sins of Thy servants, and of Thy people Israel that Thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon Thy land, which Thou hast given to Thy people for an inheritance." (1 Kings viii:33-36.) Jeremiah says that on account of the sin of the people "the showers were withholden and there hath been no latter rain." (Jerem. iii:5.) In Hosea vi:3 the latter and former rain is mentioned in connection with the restoration of the people and the return of the Lord. In the New Testament the early and latter rain is mentioned only once and that in the Epistle which is addressed not to the church, but to the twelve tribes, which are scattered abroad. This must always be remembered in reading the Epistle of James. But there it is used only as an illustration and has no further spiritual application. As the husbandman has patience in waiting for the precious fruit of the earth until he receive the early and latter rain, so we are exhorted to be patient unto the coming of the Lord.

We learn from all these passages that the early and latter rain means simply the literal rain and

nothing else. But the present day queer interpretations of the most simple statements of the Word of God have their source in the wrong division of the Word. The Book of Joel knows absolutely nothing of the church, nor did Joel prophesy concerning any event which stands in any relation whatever to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The words "early rain in righteousness" are translated by some "the teacher of righteousness." "For He giveth you the teacher of righteousness." Some of the Jewish expositors and translators have done so and one (Abarbanel) states that "the teacher of righteousness" is the Messiah. We do not think this translation is a correct one, though there is some ground for it. The context shows that "early rain" must be the true rendering, for the restoration of the land to its former fruitfulness is here exclusively in view. The peculiar phrase "the early rain in righteousness" has of course its meaning. What Jehovah does then is founded upon righteousness. It points back to the cross, where the Son of God died for that nation. (John xi:51.)

In the next place we have the result of the early and latter rain.

And the floors shall be full of corn,
And the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.
And I will restore to you the years

Which the Arbeh hath eaten,
The Jelek, the Chasel and the Gazam,
My great army which I sent among you.—(Verses 24-25.)

Prosperity then for the land returns. All the devastations wrought by the locusts will be at an end and the years of barren waste will be restored to them. Here, of course, we are reminded too of the typical meaning of the locusts, which are now called "my great army, which I sent among you." As we learned from the first chapter they typified nations. The times of the Gentiles are at an end when this glorious time for Israel's land arrives and then the desolation will cease.

Then ye shall be in abundance, and be satisfied
And praise the Name of Jehovah your God,
Who has dealt wondrously with you,
And my people shall never be ashamed.
And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,
And that I Jehovah am your God, and none else.
And my people shall never be ashamed.—(Verses 26-27.)

Israel thus blessed will break forth in singing. At last Jehovah will receive the praise from His earthly people. Elsewhere in the prophetic Word we find the glorious singing of Israel revealed. Read Isaiah xii; lxi:10; and many other passages. Twice the statement is made in these verses that His people shall never be ashamed. The days of their shame and reproach are now passed. After the long years

of suffering and humiliation glory has come at last. Never again will shame be the lot of His people, for they are healed of their backsliding. The Lord Himself furthermore will dwell in their midst. His glorious throne will be established in Zion. Of this we shall hear more when we reach the last verses of the third chapter.

VI. The Outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh. Wonders in heaven and earth.

We now reach the sixth section of this chapter. It contains a vision of what is to take place "afterwards."

And it shall come to pass afterwards,
I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy;
Your old men shall dream dreams,
Your young men shall see visions.
Yea, even upon the men servants and the maid servants,
In those days will I pour out my Spirit.
And I will give wonders in the heavens and on earth,
Blood, and fire and pillars of smoke.
The sun shall be turned to darkness,
And the moon into blood,
Before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come.
And it shall come to pass
Whosoever shall call on the name of Jehovah shall be saved.

For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance,
As Jehovah hath said,
Even for the remnant whom Jehovah shall call.
—(Verses 28-32.)

This interesting passage invites our closest attention. The almost general interpretation of this prophecy has been that it found its fulfilment on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured forth. Most expositors confine the fulfilment to that event while others claim that Pentecost was only the beginning of the fulfilment and that the event which occurred once continues to occur throughout this Christian age. We quote from one of the best commentaries. "But however certain it may be that the fulfilment took place at the first Christian feast of Pentecost, we must not stop at this one Pentecostal miracle. The address of the Apostle Peter by no means requires this limitation, but rather contains distinct indications that Peter himself saw nothing more therein than the commencement of the fulfilment, but a commencement indeed, which embraced the ultimate fulfilment, as the germ enfolds the tree; for if not only the children of the apostles' contemporaries but also those that were afar off—i. e., not foreign Jews, but the far off heathen, were to participate in the gift of the Holy Spirit, the out-

pouring of the Holy Spirit which commenced on Pentecost must continue as long as the Lord shall receive into His Kingdom those that are still standing afar, i. e., until the fulness of the Gentiles shall have entered the kingdom of God."

There is, however, no scriptural foundation for the statement that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit commenced on Pentecost must continue throughout this present age. The Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost. He was poured out once and nowhere in the New Testament is there a continued or repeated outpouring of the Holy Spirit promised. The difficulty with interpreting this great prophecy of Joel of having been fulfilled on Pentecost and being fulfilled throughout this age is that which follows in the next two verses. Wonders in heaven and on earth, fire, pillars of smoke, a darkened sun and a blood-red moon are mentioned and that in connection with the day of Jehovah, which, as we have seen is the great theme of Joel's vision. These words have been generally applied to the destruction of Jerusalem, which followed the day of Pentecost. The spiritualizing method has been fully brought into play to overcome the difficulties the 30th and 31st verses raise. The terrible day of Jehovah, it is claimed, is the destruction of Jerusalem. Thus we read in the commentary of

Patrick and Lowth: "This (verse 30) and the following verse principally point out the destruction of the city and the temple of Jerusalem by the Romans, a judgment justly inflicted upon the Jewish nation for their resisting the Holy Spirit, and contempt of the means of grace." We quote another leading commentator on Joel ii:30, Dr. Clarke; he states: "This refers to the fearful sights, dreadful portents, and destructive commotions by which the Jewish polity was finally overthrown, and the Christian religion finally established in the Roman empire. See how our Lord applies this prophecy in Matthew xxiv:29 and the parallel texts." And in verse 31 ("the sun shall be turned into darkness") Clarke says "it means the Jewish polity, civil and ecclesiastical, shall be entirely destroyed." Others give these words the same spiritualized meaning. These learned doctors tell us that Joel ii:30 and 31 relates to the destruction of the nation, and the civil and ecclesiastical polity of the Jews! This is a fair example of the havoc which a Bible interpretation makes, which ignores the great dispensational facts revealed in the Word of God. But inasmuch as the 32d verse, the last verse in this second chapter of Joel, reveals that there shall be deliverance in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem after these signs and wonders, and the

continuation of the prophecy in the third chapter shows the judgment of the enemies of the people Israel, God's ancient people, such interpretations appear at once as fundamentally wrong.

It is strange that all these expositors use the word "fulfilment" in connection with this prophecy, saying, that Peter said that the day of Pentecost was the fulfilment of what is written by Joel. But the Holy Spirit did not use the word "fulfilment" at all. He purposely avoided such a statement. In so many passages in the New Testament we find the phrase "that it might be fulfilled," but in making use of the prophecy in Acts, chapter ii, this phrase is not used and instead of it we read that Peter said, "but this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts ii:16). There is a great difference between this word and an out and out declaration of the fulfilment of that passage. Peter's words call the attention to the fact that something like that which took place on the day of Pentecost had been predicted by Joel, but his words do not claim that Joel's prophecy was there and then fulfilled. Nor does He hint at a continued fulfilment or coming fulfilment during this present age. The chief purpose of the quotation of that prophecy on the day of Pentecost was to point out to the Jews, many of whom were scoffing, that the miracu-

lous thing which had happened so suddenly in their midst was fully confirmed by what Joel had foretold would be the effect of the outpouring of the Spirit. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit had taken place, but not in the full sense as given in the Prophecy of Joel. He came for a special purpose, which was the formation of the Church and for this purpose He is still on earth.

Without following the events on Pentecost and their meaning it is evident from the entire prophecy, which precedes this prediction of the outpouring of the Spirit, that these words have never been fulfilled. We might briefly ask, what is necessary according to the contents of this second chapter in Joel, before this prophecy can be accomplished? We just mention what we have already learned before in our exposition. The people Israel must be partly restored to their land, that great invasion from the North, bringing such trouble to the land must have taken place, then there must also have come the intervention of the Lord and He must be jealous for His land and pity His people, then at that time this great outpouring of the Spirit of God will take place. It stands in the closest connection with the restoration of Israel. The promises which are Israel's (Romans ix:4) may be grouped into two classes, those which pertain to the

land, earthly blessings and supremacy over the nations, and spiritual blessings, such as knowing the Lord, walking in His ways, being a kingdom of priests and prophets. The earthly blessings are accomplished by the power of Jehovah when He is manifested as their deliverer and the spiritual blessings will be conferred upon them by the outpouring of the Spirit.

The word "afterwards" with which this prophecy is introduced refers to the same period of time as the phrase "in the latter days," that is the days when the Lord will redeem His earthly people and be merciful to His land.

Therefore when the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost it was not in fulfilment of Joel's prophecy. This prophecy has never been fulfilled nor will it be fulfilled during this present age, in which the Church is being formed, which is the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. After this is accomplished the Lord will begin His relationship with His earthly people, when He appears in His day then they will experience the fulfilment of this great prediction.

That this is the true and scriptural interpretation of these words is learned by looking at some other Scriptures.

We turn first to Numbers xi:29. This chapter

relates the event when the Lord put the Spirit who was upon Moses upon the elders so that they prophesied. Even Eldad and Medad, who had not gone out to the tabernacle prophesied in the camp. Then Moses heard of this through Joshua. He then burst forth in the words, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them." This is exactly the calling of that nation, which God hath chosen. They are called to be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. This can only be through the Spirit of God. Moses knew their stiffneckedness and uttered this longing prayer. Some day the Lord will bring this about and He will have foremost among the nations of the earth, the nation He has called and kept as His witness in His wonderful mercy on the earth. This is seen in other Scriptures as well.

In Isaiah we read the promise of the Spirit for Israel, the seed of Abraham. One of the most striking passages is the one in the xxxii chapter. "Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers, yea upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city. Because the palaces shall be forsaken, the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be dens forever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks" (Verses 13-14). This is

a prediction of judgment, which was to come and has come upon the land of Isaiah's people and upon the joyous city, Jerusalem. It corresponds to the condition of the land and the people as described by Joel. But this is not the entire prophecy. God never stops with judgment when revealing His dealings with His people. The next verse is a prophecy like the one before us here in the second chapter of Joel. "Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high" (Verse 15). The condition of the people, the land and the city will remain under judgment until the Spirit is poured upon them as a nation. Now this outpouring of the Spirit predicted here cannot be the outpouring on the day of Pentecost, because after that event the greatest dispersion of the people and devastation of their land took place. This outpouring of which Isaiah speaks is future and is identical with that of Joel. The word "pour" in this passage has a special significance. It is also used in Isaiah liii:12. It means "to empty out altogether." In Isaiah liii:12 we read "He shall divide the spoil with the strong because He poured out His soul unto death." He poured out His whole soul. So then the Spirit will be completely, altogether poured out, in a measure as it has never yet been. All the results of the outpouring of the

Spirit are mentioned by Isaiah (Read verses 15-20).

Another unfulfilled prediction is found in chapter xliv:3-4. "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed and my blessing upon thy offspring." Then we read in Isaiah lix:19-21 another promise. The time predicted is the time of the end; then the enemy comes in like a flood, while the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him. The Redeemer will come; this means His second coming (See Romans xi:26). It is written concerning the nation "As for me this is my covenant with thee, saith the Lord. My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord from henceforth and forever" (verse 21). This is the same promise, to be realized when the Lord comes to turn away ungodliness from Jacob. In Isaiah liv:13 we find still another of the many promises which are Israel's which up to the present time has never been true. "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children." To accomplish this the Spirit of God is needed. In the prophecies of Ezekiel we

find the same promises. "And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God" (Ezek. xxxvi:27-28). This prediction stands in connection with their future restoration. It has never been fulfilled. The same is true of chapter xxxvii:14. "And I will put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live; and I shall place you in your own land; then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord." The entire chapter shows the time when this will be, when the dry bones of the house of Israel receive national and spiritual life. Up to the present time this has never been.

But stronger still is Ezek. xxxix:29. "Neither will I hide my face any more from them; for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God." Now His face is still hid from them. But the day is coming when the Lord will pour out His Spirit upon them as a nation and then the restoration of the nation to the favor of God will take place and He will never hide His face from them again.

All these passages harmonize with the one in Joel. There is then in store for the people Israel,

for the remnant which is left after the great tribulation, an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The promise here in Joel will be fulfilled in Israel to the extent as given here. Even the lowest among them, the man servant and the maid servant, will share in it. The whole nation will be filled with the Spirit and will possess the Spirit with all His attending gifts and blessings. Then Moses' earnest prayer will at last be answered, the Lord's people will be prophets and they will be possessed by His Spirit.

What will that be for the world when at last His chosen people has been restored and this marvelous outpouring of the Spirit upon them has taken place? Romans xi gives us an answer.

> Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?
>
> For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:
>
> If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.
>
> For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? (Rom. xi:12-15).

But the term "all flesh" goes beyond Israel. The other nations will share in the outpouring of the Spirit and no doubt even creation will reap its great

benefits and blessings from it. In the hour of darkness and chaos (Gen. 1:2) He hovered over the waters. Through His power as the Spirit of power and the Spirit of life, He will bring about the conditions in creation, which will forever end the groaning of that fair and good creation of God, which has suffered under man's sin and the curse of sin.

VI. Salvation in Jerusalem and in Zion for the residue whom the Lord shall call (Verse 32).

And now verses 30, 31 and 32 are not difficult to understand. We need not resort to spiritual applications and other strained methods to understand them. Before the terrible day of the Lord comes there will be wonders in the heavens and on the earth. Blood, fire, pillars of smoke, the sun turning into darkness, the moon into blood are mentioned. All these words denote judgment, and it is the description of the judgment of an ungodly world, of another Egypt in that day when the Lord arises to shake the earth. Blood, fire, pillars of smoke (darkness) were some of the judgment put upon Egypt, the type of the world and its coming judgments. God will then deal with the world in judgment and the many passages in His holy Word, too numerous to mention here, in which

that judgment is described, will then become a fearful reality. Of the day of Jehovah we shall hear more in the last chapter and then we hope to bring out some of the details. The thirty-second verse with which this great chapter in Joel closes tells us of salvation. This great outpouring of the Spirit will result in salvation. It is blessedly true now that "whosoever (the great Gospel word) shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved," but it will be more true in that day. Salvation will go forth from Jerusalem once more. The word "Salvation is of the Jews" will then find its largest fulfilment. There will be the remnant of His people and the ends of the earth will likewise know the salvation of God. "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for lo I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people" (Zech. ii:11).

CHAPTER III.

We have reached the great Finale of Joel's prophecy. The vision now enlarges and puts before our view events which are in connection with "that day," the day of the Lord. We read in the previous two chapters a prophetic history of Israel and their land, the affliction which came upon them through Gentile powers and the final great trouble through the invasion of the one from the North and Jehovah's intervention in behalf of His people as well as their restoration and spiritual blessings. In this last chapter another fact is made known. In that coming day the Lord will execute judgment in the earth. He will deal with the nations which sinned against His people, His heritage Israel. His righteous judgment and retribution will come upon them. Then there is given in this chapter a great description of what will precede this judgment of nations. A great final warfare will take place, war is prepared, the mighty ones of the earth draw near and go up and the Lord comes down. It is a vivid portrayal of the events with which the age closes. In the last section of this chapter we find a brief description

of the kingdom generally called the Millennium, as it will follow these great judgments. We divide this chapter into three parts:

I. The judgment of the nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat. Tyre and Sidon's retribution (Verses 1-8).

II. The nations making war against Jerusalem before the judgment. Jehovah's glorious manifestation for the help of His people and the punishment of their enemies (Verses 9-16).

III. Jehovah's rule in the midst of His people. The kingdom (Verses 17-21).

I. The judgment of the nations.

For behold in those days and in that time
When I shall bring back the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem;
I will also bring together all nations
And will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat;
And there will I judge them on account of my people
And my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations,
And they divided my land.

And they cast lots for my people,
They gave a boy for a harlot
And sold a girl for wine, and drank it.—(Verses 1-3.)

The first verse specifies the time when Jehovah will do what He announces in the two verses which follow. It will be in those days, in that time, when the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem is brought back. Clearly then up to this time this cannot yet have been, for the captivity of His people is not yet ended. They are still scattered in the great dispersion among the nations of the earth. The time is future when the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem is brought back. Israel, the ten tribes are not mentioned here, but they are included in the prophecy; they will likewise be brought back. Joel only mentions Judah, because His prophecy was addressed to Judah and Jerusalem. The captivity, or dispersion, which is the same thing, of the people Israel will not end till divine power accomplishes it according to the many promises in the Word of God. And when at last the heavens are silent no longer and Jehovah in His power begins to fulfill His promises and their captivity ends, it will mean judgment for the nations.

It is Jehovah Himself who speaks, what He is going to do in that day, when He arises and has mercy on Zion. "I will also bring together all nations and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat." How the Lord will bring these nations together and thus accomplish His purpose is

revealed in verses 9-12. We therefore pass it by for the present till we read the second part of this chapter. But here is also the place mentioned where this great judgment of nations will be executed. It will be in the valley of Jehoshaphat. The word means translated "Jehovah judges." This name occurs elsewhere in the Word of God. King Jehu was the son of Jehoshaphat and he was the son of Nimshi (2 Kings ix:2). Significant names of the King who had to judge, for Jehu means "He is Jehovah;" Jehoshaphat, "Jehovah judges;" Nimshi, "Jehovah reveals."

In 2 Chronicles xx we read the account of King Jehoshaphat's victory over hostile nations. But the place where this took place is not the valley of Jehoshaphat, but it was called "Berachah," that is blessing. We mention this for some expositors have claimed that the place where King Jehoshaphat brought judgment upon these nations is the valley of which Joel speaks.

The valley of Jehoshaphat must be looked for in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem. It is generally placed in the valley of the Kidron on the East of Jerusalem. It may not yet be in existence. In Zechariah xiv we read of the same events which are here predicted. When the Lord appears and His feet stand on the Mount of Olives in that day.

The Mount of Olives will then cleave in the midst and there will be formed a very *great valley* (Zech. xiv:4). This great valley may be the valley where the Lord judges the nations.

In the valley of Jehoshaphat the Lord will deal with the nations and His judgment will be on account of His people and heritage Israel. The nations scattered them and divided His land. They treated His people like slaves, casting lots for His people, sold a girl for wine and drank it.

The great sin of the nations, the Gentile world-powers, is the sin against Israel. This is repeatedly mentioned by God's prophets. The foundation of the judgment of the nations of which our Lord speaks in Matthew xxv is likewise the treatment of the Jew. Read also Psalms lxxix:1-3; lxxxiii:1-6; Isaiah xxix:1-8; xxxiv:1-3; Jeremiah xxv:13-17; Zech. i:14-15; xii:2, 3.

In Joel's day such wickedness as described here of casting lots for His people and selling boys and girls was partially known. The Philistines had done this as well as Tyre and Sidon. But these words were fulfilled during the Babylonian captivity and in that great dispersion, which was brought about by the Roman empire. After the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 the very thing happened spoken by the prophet.

Nearly a million and a half of human beings perished in Jerusalem and the land in that awful warfare. Over 100,000 were taken prisoners. These hundred thousand Jews were disposed by Titus according to Josephus in the following manner: "Those under 17 years of age were publicly sold; of the remainder, some were executed immediately, some sent away to work in the Egyptian mines (which was worse than death), some kept for public shows to fight with wild beasts in all the chief cities; only the tallest and most handsome were kept for the triumphal procession in Rome." Jews were sold for so small a price as a measure of barley; thousands were thus disposed of. And what else could we add from the history of centuries, the cruel and terrible persecutions God's heritage suffered, the thousands and tens of thousands massacred, tortured, outraged and sold as slaves. Have we not beheld but recently similar horrors in Russia? And that history is not yet finished. Outbreaks of hatred against the heritage Israel are still to come and the time of Jacob's trouble soon to come will eclipse all their former suffering. It will be a time of trouble such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now nor ever shall be (Matt. xxiv:21). The day will come when the Lord will judge the nations for the evil they have done. There will be

a retribution, just and full. Of this the next verses have something to say:

Yea, also, what have ye to do with me, O Tyre and
Sidon,
And all the borders of Philistia?
Would you requite me with retaliation?
If you retaliate
Swiftly and speedily will I bring your recompense
Upon your own head.

Because ye have taken my silver and gold,
And have brought into your temples my very best
things.

And the children of Judah and of Jerusalem
Ye sold to the children of the Greeks,
That ye might remove them far from their border.

Behold I will raise them up out of the place whither
ye sold them,
And I will return the retaliation upon your own head.

And I will sell your sons and your daughters
Into the hands of the sons of Judah.
And they shall sell them to the Sabeans to a far off
nation.
For Jehovah hath spoken it.

This is an address to Tyre and Sidon. In part at least these words have been fulfilled. Tyre and Sidon and all the border of Philistia have already passed under the swift and righteous judgments of

the Lord. As they had done so it was done unto them. They had sold the children of Judah to the Greeks and the children of Tyre and Sidon were sold to the Sabeans. History shows a fulfilment of this. Philistia had conquered Judah and done all this evil and in turn they were spoiled and retaliation came upon their heads. This shows *how* the Lord will judge in that day. But the words must also have their final fulfilment when the nations are in the valley of Jehoshaphat.

II. The nations making war against Jerusalem before the judgment. Jehovah's glorious manifestation for the help of His people and the punishment of their enemies (Verses 9-16).

The words which now follow in this chapter must be connected with the second verse. There the Spirit of God declared that all nations shall be brought together into the valley of Jehoshaphat to be dealt with on account of Israel. And now the details of that judgment, how the nations will gather, prepare war, assume a defiant attitude and beat their ploughshares into swords is vividly described. The judgment hosts of God, the angels are seen coming down and then Jehovah appears in all His majesty, while sun and moon are darkened. These

verses will become clearer if we divide them as to the persons who speak.

The Lord speaking:

Proclaim this among the nations:
Declare a war,
Arouse the mighty ones,
Let all the men of war draw near, let them come up!

Beat your ploughshares into swords,
And your pruning hooks into spears.
Let the weak say, I am strong.

Come together
All ye nations round about
Gather yourselves together.

The Prayer of the Prophet:

Thither cause thy mighty ones to come down,
O Jehovah!

The Lord speaking:

Let the nations arise and come up
To the valley of Jehoshaphat,
For there will I sit to judge all the nations round about.

The Lord to His judgment hosts:

Put in the sickle,
For the harvest is ripe;
Come—Tread!
For the wine-press is full,
The vats overflow;
For their wickedness is great.

The Prophet beholding the gathering:

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!
For the day of Jehovah is at hand in the valley of decision.

The sun and the moon are darkened
And the stars withdraw their shining.

And Jehovah shall roar from Zion
And send forth His voice from Jerusalem;
And the heavens and the earth shall shake;
But Jehovah will be a refuge for His people
And a fortress for the sons of Israel.

Here a great warfare is proclaimed. The nations are summoned. Some interpreters think the people Israel are called together; but that is wrong. The summons is to the nations and not to the scattered people Israel. Throughout the prophetic Word we read that confederacies of nations will oppose God at the close of this present age. There will be a double confederacy of nations; the alliance of nations composing the restored Roman Empire, and the alliance of nations coming from the North. This northern confederacy is here described. Many Scriptures could be quoted to show what is predicted for military Christendom and how in the blindness of their hearts they will assemble to make war against God and His anointed coming up against Jerusalem. We mention a few: Psalms ii:

1-5; Psalms lxxxiii:1-6; Isaiah xxix:1-8; xxxiv:1-3; Jeremiah xxiv:13-17; Ezekiel xxxviii; Zech. xii: 2-3; 9; xiv:2-5; Revel. xix:19.

In the appointed time when the measure of wickedness is full the nations under the leadership of the beast and the Assyrian will come together for the final great conflict. All seems to be preparing for this. Suggestions are made for the union of all nations with a "world's president." The events in the East, the rejuvenation of Turkey, the restoration of the Jewish people, still in unbelief, to their land, all indicate a near fulfilment of these great prophecies. The so-called "Christian nations" with their ambitions, rivalries, jealousies and in their corruption, increase of crimes and wealth will at last fulfil the long predicted destiny and gather themselves to war. Plowshares, we read in this divine summoning of the nations, will become swords and pruninghooks, spears. In Isaiah ii:4 and Micah iv:3 we read the opposite. Nations shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks. This will be in the millennium. Before that happy time comes the other will take place.

Then there is a prayer. When the Prophet beheld the nations coming up against Jerusalem, assembling with their armies to assail His people, he

breaks out in prayer. "Thither cause Thy mighty ones to come down O Jehovah!" Joel is here acting as the representative of the godly Jewish remnant, which is so vividly portrayed in Prophecy. When the true church has left the earth and the consummation of the age takes place a believing remnant gathered from God's ancient people will witness and suffer, pray and wait for the promised deliverance. If one reads the Book of Psalms with this thought in mind, that the many recorded prayers of a suffering people, addressed to God for interference from above and the overthrow of their enemies, belong properly to that believing remnant and will all be fulfilled in the end of the age, the whole Book of Psalms becomes illuminated.

The Prophet's utterance has this meaning. He calls on Jehovah to send down His mighty ones to oppose the nations who invade Israel's land and compass the city of Jerusalem. The mighty ones are the angelic hosts. The angels will be used in that day; they are the reapers at the time of the harvest (Matthew xiii:39). They have a prominent part in the Book of Revelation.

Then, as an answer, Jehovah speaks again and commands the nations to appear in the valley of Jehoshaphat for the judgment. It hardly needs to be stated that this is not the so-called "universal

judgment," a term which is not known at all in Scripture. It is a judgment of "all the nations round about," those who have taken a definite part in the great final warfare and who come against Jerusalem. The 13th verse contains the address of Jehovah to the judgment hosts, the angel reapers. Solemn are these words. What a time it will be when the Lord speaks thus!

> Put in the sickle,
> For the harvest is ripe;
> Come—Tread!
> For the wine-press is full,
> The vats overflow;
> For their wickedness is great.

There is a double representation of the judgment, reaping and treading the wine-press. This is the same as revealed in the great New Testament book of Prophecy, the Apocalypse.

> And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle in the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp

sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and *cast* it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God. And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand *and* six hundred furlongs.—(Rev. xiv:14-20.)

Everything then is ripe for judgment as in the harvest, when the corn is ripe, the sickle must come into play. The harvest is the end of the age, as our Lord tells us in Matthew xiii. The treading of the wine-press is the type of the wrath of God. Then the day of vengeance has come. Isaiah lxiii:6 will see its terrible accomplishment. "And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drink in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth." God's love and patience now are incomprehensible; His wrath and judgment will be so likewise. That day of wrath is rapidly approaching. The heavens will be silent no longer. The Lord will arise and shake the earth.

Again the seer speaks. It is an exclamation of the Prophet. He beholds the multitudes in the

valley of decision. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! The day of Jehovah is at hand.

And all at once darkness spreads over the face of the earth. Sun and moon are darkened. The stars withdraw their shining. How ominous that darkness must be! These physical phenomena are seen repeatedly by the Prophets and the Lord Himself mentioned them (Matthew xxiv:29-31). But at the same time His voice will be heard, the voice of Him who hung on the cross when the Sun was darkened, the voice which was heard in that deep and never to be forgotten cry, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? That voice will speak again and He Himself will appear in majesty and glory. He will roar from Zion. Heaven and earth will be shaken. (See Haggai ii:6 and Heb. xii:26.) But while He comes thus to judge His enemies and deal with them in wrath, He will remember His people Israel in mercy and be a refuge and fortress for the Sons of Israel.

Most all the prophetic books close with visions concerning the glorious future in store for God's earthly people and the establishment of the theocratic kingdom in their midst. The last chapter in Isaiah reveals this: "For thus, saith the Lord, Behold I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream ——."

(Isaiah lxvi:12). "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon unto another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord of hosts" (verse 23). Jeremiah announces the judgment of Jerusalem's mighty enemy Babylon, which will only be final when the last trouble has swept over Jeremiah's nation, that is the great tribulation yet to come. "And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates. And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her; and they shall be weary. Thus far are the words of Jeremiah" (Jeremiah li:63-64). Ezekiel closes with a most vivid description of the glory of the land, the new temple, the restoration of the tribes to the land of promise. The last sentence in Ezekiel is "Jehovah shammah," which means, "The Lord is there." It is Jerusalem's new name, because the Lord will manifest Himself in their midst. Daniel closes his book, too, with a great prophecy concerning the end, when Israel dead nationally and spiritually will arise out of the dust, when Daniel's people shall be delivered. Hosea speaks by God's Spirit in his last chapter on the healing of Israel and that the anger will be turned away from them.

This is followed by the promise of blessing, such as can only be realized in the future. "The nation Israel shall be in beauty as the olive tree" (Hosea xiv:4-7). The "herdsman of Tekoa," Amos, after announcing coming judgments assures us by divine revelation in his last chapter that only good is in store for the people who wandered to and fro over the face of the earth, during the time of their apostasy. "And I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God" (Amos ix:14-15). Obadiah's little book closes with the sentence, "And the kingdom shall be the Lord's," a prediction still unaccomplished. Micah has for his ending the assurance of blessing for Israel and that the sworn promises will be performed (Mic. vii:19-20). Habakkuk's great third chapter tells the same story. "I will bring you again; I will gather you; I will turn back your captivity," is the divine message with which Zephaniah closes (Zeph. iii:20). The shaking heavens and the shaking earth and what is connected with this coming catastrophe is the last

message of Haggai (ii:21-23). The great finale of Zechariah is a wonderful chapter in which are brought together once more the prophecies of the former prophets concerning Jerusalem's great and glorious future (Chap. xiv). And while it is true that the last word in the Prophet Malachi is the word "curse," the last chapter also announces that the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings.

Our book has also for its final vision, a vision of blessing.

III. Jehovah in the midst of His people. The Kingdom (Verses 17-21).

And ye shall know that I, Jehovah your God
Dwell in Zion my holy mountain;
And Jerusalem shall be holy,
And strangers shall no more pass through her.
And it shall come to pass in that day
That the mountains shall drop down new wine,
And the hills shall flow with milk,
And all the river beds of Judah shall be full with waters.
And a fountain shall come forth from the house of Jehovah,
And shall water the valley of Shittim.

Egypt shall be a desolation
And Edom shall be a desolate wilderness
For their violence against the children of Judah,
Because they shed innocent blood in their land.

But Judah shall abide forever
And Jerusalem from generation to generation.

And I will purge them from the blood
From which I had not purged them.
And Jehovah will dwell in Zion.

The previous verse spoke of the Lord's appearing in behalf of His people. His voice will be heard. This great manifestation of the Lord and His voice is frequently mentioned in prophecy. In Isaiah we read of His voice, when He appeareth. "And the Lord shall cause His glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of His arm, with the indignation of His anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering and tempest and hailstones" (Is. xxx:30). When the trouble will be upon the remnant of Israel then that voice will be heard. "A voice of noise from the city, a voice of the Lord that rendereth recompense to His enemies (Is. lxvi:6). That voice is mentioned in the Psalms. Seven times we read of the voice of the Lord in the xxix Psalm; it is a Psalm which describes the deliverance of Israel from an invading enemy, the same northern power, which we saw described in Joel's vision. It is the same voice which spoke to Saul while on the road to Damascus. And that voice will mean in that coming day wrath for the enemies of God and blessing for His people

Israel. Jehovah will be a refuge for His people. Then they will come to that knowledge which they so long refused, that the delivering Jehovah is their God. But the Jehovah who appears there is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who was in their midst and who was delivered by the people to be crucified. What a day it will be when "They will look upon Him whom they have pierced and mourn for Him" (Zech. xii:10). He will dwell in Zion, the mountain of Glory. The Glory from above will find a resting place on that holy hill. There He will be enthroned as King (Ps. ii:6). From there the glory will be spread over all (Isaiah iv:5-6; Ps. lxviii:16). "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is my rest forever; here will I dwell for I have desired it" (Ps. cxxxii:13-14). It is the literal Zion and not something spiritual. Even good expositors of the Bible have missed the mark. One good commentator says: "For Zion or Jerusalem is of course not the Jerusalem of the earthly Palestine, but the sanctified and glorified city of the living God, in which the Lord will be eternally united with His redeemed, sanctified and glorified church." Such exposition emanates from ignorance of God's purposes with His earthly people and in not dividing the Word of Truth rightly. It

is not at all the heavenly Jerusalem which is in view anywhere in these Old Testament prophecies but the earthly Jerusalem.

That city will at last become the "city of a great King" and as such will be holy, and strangers, the Gentiles, shall no more pass through her. The same truth the Lord uttered when He said "Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

Elsewhere we read the same facts concerning the holiness of Jerusalem in that day. We call attention to Zechariah xiv:20-21:

> In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, holiness unto the Lord; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the alter. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts.

"That day" is the day when the Lord's voice will be heard, when He arises and has mercy on Zion. But more than that will take place in the day the Lord appears to reveal His Glory. The mountains shall drop down new wine, the hills flow with milk and the river beds of Judah shall be full with water. There is no need of spiritualizing these words and make spiritual blessings out of it. That great spiri-

tual blessings will then flow forth and be poured out upon the remnant of His people is true; but the prediction here rather points to the blessings, which the land will receive.

The numerous prophecies given by the other prophets predicting a wonderful state of fertility, great changes in the physical conditions we cannot all quote here. Amos, for instance, predicts in Jehovah's name, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes, him that soweth the seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine and all the hills shall melt" (Amos. ix:13). It will be the time of restitution of all things, as Peter calls this coming, blessed age, when he spoke to the Jews in Jerusalem. That the prophecy here in Joel refers exclusively to Israel's land is obvious. Other prophecies, however, show that the whole earth will share in these blessings. What a change that will be when the now barren hills and mountains flow down with new wine and when the dried up river beds are filled with water. Once more that land will be literally flowing with milk and honey. But there is also a special fountain mentioned.

"And a fountain shall come forth from the house of Jehovah,

"And shall water the valley of Shittim."

This fountain, sending forth a life giving stream is not mentioned by Joel exclusively. Ezekiel had a great vision in connection with the marvelous millennial temple, which will some day stand in Jerusalem.

Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house *stood toward* the east, and the waters came down from the right side of the house, at the south *side* of the altar. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the outer gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side (Ez. xlvii:1, 2).

And after the Prophet had measured the waters and found them "waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over," he heard that these waters were for healing.

And it shall come to pass, *that* every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh (verse 9).

In the Prophet Zechariah, in the last chapter a similar prophecy is found.

And it shall be in that day, *that* living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea; in summer and in winter shall it be (Zech. xiv:8).

Three prophets witness to this fountain, Joel, Ezekiel and Zechariah. It is interesting that a fountain from beneath the Temple used to supply the city with water. We quote from a reliable source:

"The existence of a large supply of water under the Temple is beyond all question. While the Temple was still standing, mention is made of an ever-flowing fountain under it, as well as pools and cisterns for preserving rain-water. One well acquainted with the localities says, 'The pavements had slopes for the sake of a flush of water in order to cleanse away the blood from the victims. For on festival occasions many thousands of animals were slain. But of water there was an unfailing supply, a copious and natural fountain within gushing over; and there being moreover wonderful underground receptacles, in the substructure of the temple, and each of these having numerous pipes, the several streams inter-communicating.' The same writer relates that, more than half a mile from the city, he was told to stoop down, and heard the sound of gushing waters underground. The natural fountain, then, beneath the Temple, was doubtless augmented by waters brought from a distance, as required by the "diverse washings" of the priests, and to carry off the blood of the victims. Whencesoever this water was supplied, it furnished Jerusalem with an abundant supply of water."

What a fountain of living and lifegiving water this will be which shall gush forth again from the house of Jehovah! Even the valley of Shittim, beyond the Dead Sea, will be reached and will be watered by the fountain.

There is no reason why the literalness of all this should be doubted. That a stream of spiritual blessing will also go forth from Jerusalem unto the uttermost parts of the earth is not less true.

The 19th verse presents a difficulty. It speaks of judgment to fall upon Egypt. They shed innocent blood in their land, they did violence against the children of Judah. Desolation is to come upon Egypt and Edom. But in Isaiah xix we read:

> In that day shall Israel he the third with Egypt and with Assyria, *even* a blessing in the midst of the land:
> Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed *be* Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance (Verses 24, 25).

According to this Egypt is to have a great blessing and be the people of God and share a portion with Israel. But here in Joel the prediction declares that Egypt is to be a desolation. Some have therefore claimed that there is a glaring contradiction between these two statements. But the context in Isaiah xix solves the difficulty. In the 22d verse we find the following prediction:

And the Lord shall smite Egypt: He shall smite and heal *it:* and they shall return *even* to the Lord, and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them.

When the Lord appears His hand will rest upon Egypt in judgment. He will smite Egypt. But Egypt will cry out of that judgment when desolation rests upon the land and return to the Lord and He in His infinite mercy will heal them. Egypt will be lifted out of the dust and receive a place of blessing only second to that which Israel enjoys. Mercy shall then rejoice over judgment and in wrath the Lord will remember mercy. What a miracle of mercy that will be! A nation so debased as Egypt, with such a record of evil against God's people lifted out of desolation and judgment into a place of blessing. "Blessed be Egypt my people" shall it then be said; in the seed of Abraham even this repenting nation will be blessed. God is ever true to His promises.

Joel speaks only of the judgment which will fall upon Egypt in that day. Isaiah also tells of judgment, but through him we learn that Egypt will turn to the Lord and the Lord will graciously heal Egypt. Judah will abide forever. His people will be cleansed. Jehovah, our ever blessed Lord, will dwell in Zion. The happy and glorious state of the land and the whole earth during the millennium is

thus tersely stated. For when He reigns there will be righteousness and peace; glory will cover the earth as the waters cover the deep. Thus ends the great vision of Joel, the son of Pethuel. May the eye of faith behold these blessed revelations and may we live in anticipation of what is soon to be.

APPENDIX A.

REASONS FOR THE EARLY DATE OF JOEL.

One of the recent commentators of the Book of Joel* gives seven reasons for making Joel the oldest of the Prophets.

1. Joel charges the Philistines with having invaded Judah, captured the inhabitants, and sold them as slaves. Now according to 2 Chron. xxi:10, this happened under Joram, B. C. 889-883. And they suffered the punishment predicted for their crime, under Uzziah, 2 Chron. xxvi:6. Hence Joel could not have written this book before B. C. 889, nor later than 732.

2. The Phœnicians, i. e., those of Tyre and Sidon, who in the days of David and Solomon were the allies, had in later times become the enemies of Judah. They too had been guilty of selling Jewish prisoners to the Grecians. Joel predicts that they also shall be punished for this crime,—a prediction fulfilled in the time of Uzziah, B. C. 811-759. This proves that Joel must have prophesied before the days of Uzziah.

3. The Edomites (iii:19), are ranked among the enemies of Judah. They came from the same stock as the Jews, and on account of their sin against their brethren, their country was to become a perpetual desolation. From

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*Dr. August Wünsche: Die Weissagungen des Propheten Joel. Leipzig, 1872.

2 Kings viii:20, comp. with 2 Chron. xxi:8, we learn that they became independent of Judah in the time of Joram, B. C. 889-883. They were again subdued, and their capital city Petra captured, B. C. 838-811, though the southern and eastern parts of their territory were not conquered until the reign of Uzziah, about B. C. 830. The prophet must have exercised his ministry, therefore, prior to the latter date.

4. The fact that no mention is made of the invasion by the Syrians of Damascus, proves that Joel was one of the early prophets. This occurred in the latter part of the reign of Joash, B. C. 850-840.

5. The high antiquity of Joel is proved by the fact that he makes no reference to the Assyrian invasion of the two Jewish kingdoms in B. C. 790. On the other hand, Amos clearly alludes to it (vi:14).

6. Another proof is derived from the relation between Joel and Amos. The latter was certainly well acquainted with the writings of the former.

7. The mention of the Valley of Jehoshaphat is a circumstance leading to the same conclusion. It took this name from the memorable victory there gained over Moab and Ammon. The way in which Joel refers to it shows that this event must have been a comparatively recent one, and that the memory of it was still fresh.

On these grounds we conclude that in fixing the time of this prophet, we cannot take for our *terminus a quo* an earlier date than B. C. 890, nor for our *terminus ad quem* a later one than 840. It most probably falls between B. C. 860-850. Joel therefore is the oldest of the Minor Prophets.

APPENDIX B.

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE LOCUST.

From Dr. A. Munro, "The Locust Plague."

We have now to consider the Locust in its larval stage, in which it is found to be most destructive to the crops over which it passes. As the larva undergoes certain changes or moults, it will be better to follow the natural order or course of events. The metamorphosis is not complete, or, as it is termed, it is hemimetabolic. From the birth or exit from the nest of eggs till it assumes the state of being of a fully fledged flying locust a period of seven or eight weeks elapses. I am not certain that the exact time to a day has been annotated or fixed by any observer as to when the various stages end, and perhaps some variation may prevail. At the same time, it will be found convenient to attend to the prominent features connected with its several stages at this time. It is not till from fifteen or twenty days after birth that the very first appearance of wings can be traced, and this is done then only in the form of *tiny scales* on the trunk or thora. The stages through which it passes in the larval condition are manifested by a growth and the distinct stripping off of its outer layer or skin at certain well-marked periods, somewhat after the fashion that the gloves are removed from the hand. As the animal increases in size you may, towards the latter portion of its larval life,

forcibly remove the external covering and find the formation of the wings underneath.

Appearance in larval form.—When the tiny creature issues from its nest it is of a greenish-white or creamy color, about one-eighth of an inch or seven millimetres long, and when it throws off its covering, which it sets about doing at once, it soon begins to move and creep. The very dust of the ground, which was so still before, now seems to waken into life from the vast multitude that exists of the tiny creatures. The number of these small forms seems infinite. In a day or two, according to the state of the weather, the whiteness disappears, they become mottled, and the heat of the sun turns the color gradually into a homogeneous blackish brown or dark hue. You find the chief rudimentary parts of the body of the full-grown locust there, less the wings, even in this early stage.

Early movements.—They begin to move by a process of twisting or rolling over one another, so that for the first few days they received the name of "twisters." At night they gather themselves into companies, or heaps, or bunches so as to keep themselves warm, and thus rest for the night. They early show their gregarious nature. During this initiatory period, if there is plenty of pasture about for them to eat, they do not march far away; if they do, it is *en masse;* but they spread out selecting warm and sunny places, and eat and grow, keeping pretty well in the vicinity of their birthplace. Within eight or ten days they can jump about 4 or 6 inches, and so they evince considerable progress. Their eating and movable apparatuses show evident signs of rapid development.

"Grasshopper" stage.—In the first three or four weeks, until they cast off their second or third skin or covering, they keep pretty near to the pastures in the neighborhood of their birthplace, and do not show till then any desire to go farther afield, if they have plenty to eat; but, if not, they move on *en masse*, and not in open file, like a semi-liquid stream, till they find food. In the United States of America the locust at the stage of which we are now speaking (*i. e.*, at the third or fourth week) receives the name of grasshopper on account of its hopping or jumping qualifications, the legs being then more adapted for hopping or jumping than those of the wandering locust. But it is not the technical grasshopper, as we are accustomed to view that insect.

Orderly instincts.—At the age of three to four weeks a new characteristic makes its appearance. A desire to explore manifests itself, and in a surprising manner. The whole company moves in a body in one general direction, and more or less in a straight line, which is a matter worthy of particular attention, as if by one common instinct, without apparently having any recognized leader or commander. "The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands." Now, they thin off or spread themselves out, eating everything that comes in their way—wheat (if sufficiently young and tender), maize (even if strong and old), corn, sugar-cane, linseed, alfalfa (lucerne), pasture of all kinds, vegetables of all kinds (tomatoes and celery) and all garden produce, potatoes (ordinary and sweet), the leaves and even sometimes the bark of the trees (with one or two exceptions)—the fruit of course is lost for the season, sometimes causing the ruin of the trees; orange, willow, poplar, palm, banana, peach,

pear, plum, vine, acacias, roses, etc., are stripped, with the exception of the gum and paradise trees, which seem to be poisonous to them. They make everything "clean bare"; sometimes they will enter houses and eat the very clothes and curtains at the windows. Scarcely anything comes amiss to their ravenous appetites when sufficiently famished—even dry lint on used-up fences, planks, dry leaves, paper (entire books), cotton, woolen fabrics, wool on the sheep. Further, if compelled by hunger, they have been known to eat dry animal substances, and even cannibalism as a resource when all other food fails. They eat their own weak ones.

Preferences in food.—But if one were to specialize in regard to the food the locusts particularly like or dislike, it may be said few things come amiss to them, on the one hand; and, on the other, where food is more plentiful or abundant, they are somewhat fastidious or capricious. Thus, in one case, they do not refuse to eat their own diseased or weak kind, and even feed on dead animals; while, in the other, they pass by sweet stuffs, and seem to refer the bitter, acrid vegetables and plants. Natural grasses are not appreciated so much as cultivated plants—grains and cultivated pastures suffer first and chiefly! They are not specially fond of melons, pumpkins, or the poisonous weed Mio-mio. When wheat is pretty far advanced, they pass it by—not so with mealies, tobacco, etc. Indeed, most vegetables and all fruit and garden plants they eat with avidity.

I have seen fields of pasture over which this scourge passed, and there was not a blade left, not even for a goat to nip. The surface there was "desolate," and quite black-colored.

Destructive powers universal and unsparing.—It is a curious phenomenon to see the trees stripped in one day of their foliage just in the season of the year when they ought to be covered with leaves and fruit. In a month or two after being stripped bare by the locusts, young leaves again sprout out; but in trees such as the orange a visitation like that described destroys the fruit for two seasons, and not unfrequently the trees are permanently injured. Thus in one district* the account of the plague runs:—The locusts have devoured everything—grapes, wheat, beans, and potatoes—the running stream is infested, and the loss is calculated at £1,000,000 sterling. Now this took place in a vine-growing district, so that nothing seems to escape them. Other instances can be cited illustrative of the universality of the destroying power, but it is unnecessary.

Appearance on the march.—When these hoppers or jumpers are on the "march," they sometimes appear so determined and bent on their fearful execution of their work that they resemble in certain aspects and have got the name of an "army on the march." They move in open file, and carry themselves in a proud, haughty way, with heads high up and fixed. It is rather beautiful and interesting to see them "on the march," if we only divest ourselves for the moment of the idea of their devastating object. In this stage they can both jump as well as walk, but walking is the feature. If left alone, they walk (hence "voetgangers" in Dutch); but if you approach them or meddle with them they jump. They can hop about a foot or so in height, and of course the older and stronger they be-

**In South Africa.*

come, they acquire more strength and can leap better. The comparatively slender hind legs of our voetgangers do not tend to good jumping; but these acquire more and more strength, so that the adult can jump six or more feet.

Marching stage the most deadly.—It is in this marching stage that they do enormous damage, and eat every edible thing in their path, and completely destroy the work of the husbandman. They are not content with levying toll merely, but they will have all, and will leave nothing behind but desolation. They therefore are unlike the flying company of locusts, which only levy toll here and there; but these when they pass leave nothing.

No fears deter.—The whole of the company begin to walk at the same time, as if by order; the head is kept erect, and the neck is as if stiffened. They go straight on, irrespective of danger; and though they manifest a decided power sometimes to select a slightly different course, yet they are not easily turned from their course, and being so numerous and closely phalanxed nothing escapes them. The sight of this "army" is a very impressive one, and once seen will never be forgotten. In some respects it is an awful sight; the spectacle strikes you with pity and sorrow to see at once before you that the toil and the labor for the season, or indeed the year, is lost.

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